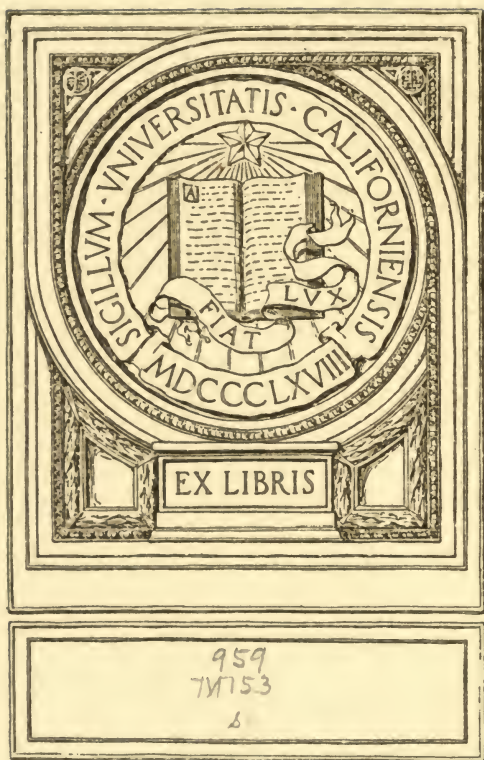


THE SISTINE EVE  
AND OTHER POEMS  
BY  
PERCY MACKAYE









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# THE SISTINE EVE

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

PERCY MACKAYE

AUTHOR OF "THE PRESENT HOUR," ETC.



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To  
W. V. M.    E. A. R.  
&  
R. T.  
IN FELLOWSHIP



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**PART ONE**

**POEMS CHIEFLY OCCASIONAL**





# TICONDEROGA <sup>1</sup>

## A BALLAD

### I

*What spirits conjure thee from time,  
Ticonderoga?  
On thy headland rock  
Of history,  
Who are these that knock  
And summon thee  
To move thine ancient lips in rhyme,  
Ticonderoga?*

Where the wind-blown swallows  
Veer and vary,  
Where the shore and shallows  
Lie visionary,  
Titans three  
Stand at my knee:  
Each one is a century.  
In their shadow, silently,  
Sits the sibyl Memory.  
And her silence questions me:

<sup>1</sup> Read at the celebration of the three hundredth anniversary of the discovery of Lake Champlain, at Fort Ticonderoga, July 6, 1909.

## II

*Who glide so dim upon the lake  
Ticonderoga?  
Over their dreaming prow  
The morning star  
Blazes their goal; but now —  
More dusk and far —  
What old world dwindles in their wake,  
Ticonderoga?*

The fleur-de-lis, the fleur-de-lis !  
The White Chevalier — lo, 'tis he !  
His pale canoe along the tide  
The painted Huron paddles guide  
With dumb, subdued elation;  
The wild dawn stains their bodies bare,  
The wild dawn gleams about his hair;  
Steeped in his soul's adventure, lie  
The valleys of discovery —  
The peaks of expectation.  
Midway the lake they pause: on high  
His arm he raises solemnly.  
Above the lilies, that emboss  
His azure banner, and the pied  
Algonquin plumes that float beside,  
He holds the shining cross.

“Champlain!” — The placid word  
The mute air hath not stirred.  
Touched by the morning’s wing,  
The ruddied waters, quickening,  
Alone are kindled by that christening.  
Quaint splendors mass  
Within the lake’s clear glass,  
And liquid lilies golden run  
In rose gules of the rising sun.  
Naught else there of acclaim  
Greets the great Chevalier’s name,  
Save where the water-fowl’s primeval broods  
Awake Bulwagga’s lone and echoing solitudes.

## III

*What strident horror breaks thy spell,  
Ticonderoga?  
What long and ululating yell?*

The Iroquois: in covert glade  
They build their pine-bough palisade,  
And weave in trance  
Their sachem dance  
With hawk-screams of their heathen wars,  
Till naked on my shrilling shores  
Mohawk and wild Algonquin meet  
And taunt, with fleer and blown conceit,

Each other's painted ranks:  
But, lo where now their flanks  
Give way and reel!  
And 'mid the silent sagamores,  
In shining cuish and casque of steel,  
Before them all  
Stands bright and tall,  
With gauntlet clenched and helmet vised,  
The calm knight-errant of the Christ;  
Then, in sign miraculous,  
Levels his arquebus  
And, charged with bullets from his bandoleer,  
Looses the bolt of preternatural thunder.  
A sachem falls: the wild men stare in wonder  
And mazèd fear;  
Once more his engine peals, and hurls the fire  
Whose flash shall kindle continents to ire.

## IV

*Like sanguine clouds at sunset spread  
The ages slumber round thy head,  
Ticonderoga!  
Tremendous forms  
Loom in their dreams:  
Through levin-light of starless storms,  
By giant fords of chartless streams,  
Saxon and Gaul*

*Wrestle and rise and fall,  
Conquering the region aboriginal.  
Hark! From the long tides of Lake George,  
What rolling drum-beat rumbles through thy  
gorge,  
Ticonderoga?*

O why should woman weep for war?  
Or man — why should it vex him more?  
Or why beside so sweet a shore  
Dreadful should the drum be?  
O clear the snorting trumpets neigh,  
And blithe the squealing bagpipes play!  
O red the redcoats on the bay,  
Sailing with Abercromby!

A thousand bateaux floating glide  
And flaunt their banners sheen;  
Calm isles swim by on the summer tide  
Clad in their birchen green.

Lord Howe he lies on a rude bearskin  
Beneath the pleasant sky;  
Says: Never day hath fairer been  
For one's dear land to die.

Says: Tell me true now, gallant Stark,  
What trail may foil the Frenchmen?

Where should our redcoats disembark  
To rout Montcalm his henchmen?

A trout-brook once I fished, Lord Howe,  
To fry my catch in bacon:  
Along that trail, Sir, I'll allow  
Ticonderoga's taken.

O what so wildly fair as war!  
From dancing skiff and dripping oar  
Land down on yonder dreamy shore  
And drowsy let the drum be.  
O proud as life the far crag's flush!  
And sweet as youth — the hermit-thrush!  
O deep as death the dark wood's hush,  
Marching with Abercromby!

---

Our trail grows blind, good Putnam: draw  
More close your forest rangers.  
By yonder balsam [hark!] I saw —  
Who calls there — friends or strangers?

A mile hence runs a mill, Lord Howe:  
Might be the Frenchers sawing;  
Or likely, Sir, ye heard yon crow  
Round Roger's Rock a-cawing.

*Qui vive?* Their muskets flare the wood;  
*Français!* Their wild cheers start:  
Lord Howe is dropt down where he stood,  
A hot ball through his heart.

They drive them back, they drown their boast  
In blood and the rushing river,  
But the heart of Abercromby's host —  
The Lord of Hosts deliver!

---

Said is prayer and sung is psalm;  
In the moonlight waits Montcalm.  
Felled is tree and sunk is trench;  
On their ramparts rest the French.  
Moon is waned and night is gone,  
And the plateau, in the dawn,  
Strown with strange gigantic wrack,  
Bristles like a wild boar's back,  
Horrid shagg'd with monstrous spines  
Of splintered oaks and tangled pines.  
Where last night the setting sun  
Placid forest looked upon,  
In its place the sunrise sees  
Rubble heaps of writhen trees,  
Boughs — that hid the shy bird's nest —  
Sharpened for a soldier's breast.



Hot soars the sun: in dove-white swarms  
Cluster the dazzling uniforms  
Along the earthworks; distant shines  
The vanguard of the English lines.  
Scarlet from the sombre firs  
They start like sudden tanagers,  
And smoothly sweep the open glade  
Toward the abatis. There, waylaid,  
They flounder midst the galling heap  
Of tumbled branches, where they leap  
And crawl, as 'mid some huge morass.  
Like locusts in storm-beaten grass.  
The looming breastworks now they see  
But still no foemen. Suddenly,  
Blinding the noon, a dusk of smoke  
Blooms, and the roaring air hath broke  
In hurricanes of scorching hail,  
Through which, to dying eyes that quail,  
Falls the round sun — a fiery grail.

*Vive le Roi!* rings from the wall  
Of flame: *Vive notre Général!*

Choked by the fury and the fire,  
The rended English ranks suspire  
A moment's pause, then maddened rush  
Stifling through the giant brush  
Where, trapped in pits of jagged spars,



Rangers and yelling regulars  
Struggle to shoot and strain to see  
The blithe and viewless enemy.

*Vive le Roi!* shrilly the call  
Rings clear: *Vive notre Général!*

Whirled from the zigzag bastion's scarp,  
The hellish crossfire weaves its warp.  
Thrice they return, and thrice again:  
Image of God! and are these men  
With eyes upturned in sightless stare,  
Glazed with the dead hate that they glare:  
And one, with dumb mouth, shouts in death  
To one the red blood strangleth,  
And one, outstretched with woful brow,  
Hangs spiked upon a greenwood bough,  
Wrought in a sculptured agony  
Like Him that died upon a tree.

The soul of Abercromby's host  
Follows Lord Howe — his shining ghost:  
On stormy ridge and parapet  
It rides in flame, it leads them yet;  
Smiling, with wistful image wan,  
A dead man leads the dying on.  
And Campbell, Laird of Inverawe,  
Hath met the doom his dream foresaw;

Pierced by his murdered kinsman's eyes,  
His clansmen bear him where he dies.

Lord Howe, Lord Howe, why shouldst thou  
fall !

Thy life it was the life of all ;  
Thy death ten thousand hath undone.  
England hath sunken with the sun.  
Ticonderoga's lost and won !

---

O women, weep ye yet for war ?  
Bugles and banners, flaunt no more !  
For some be sleeping by the shore  
In slumber dark, and some be  
Awake in fever's roaring gorge,  
And some, in crowded keels that forge  
Southward, curse heaven and Lake George,  
Flying with Abercromby !

# V

*Still round thy brow the riven war-clouds range,  
Ticonderoga :  
The conquest marches though the colors change.  
And now, where revolution's lightnings run,  
Beyond the battle-smoke, sublime and wan,  
Quivers the patient star of Washington.  
Ranger 'gainst regular,*

*Sundered in enmity,  
Opens thine ancient scar  
Newly — for liberty.  
Now with a rushing noise  
Burst freedom's fountains  
Where the green-forest boys  
March from their mountains.  
Listen! What wheedling fife  
Quickens thy smouldering memories to life,  
Ticonderoga?*

We're marching for to take the fort  
With Ethan — Ethan Allen,  
That when with fight he fills a quart  
He ups and gulps a gallon.  
Double-quick it! faster! — hep!  
Lord! his blood is brandy.  
Mind the music and the step,  
And hold your muskets handy.

Friends and fellow soldiers — halt!  
Mind your P's, you noodle!  
What mother's son will earn his salt  
And dance to Yankee Doodle?  
There stands Ticonderoga: state  
What now ye mean to do there.  
Yon's the fortress' wicket-gate:  
How many will march through there?

As many now as volunteer  
    Poise your firelocks ! — Right, Sir !  
Each man has swung his musket clear,  
    Each man files off to fight, Sir.  
The British sentry points his gun,  
    And Ethan hears him click it ;  
He fires : the Yankees yell ‘ Come on ! ’  
    And thunder through the wicket.

They thunder through the barracks court  
    And ram the British mortars. —  
What rag-tail rebels make such sport  
    In great King George’s quarters ? —  
King George’s style is over, Sir !  
    You redcoats wear the wrong dress :  
Ground arms to the great Jehovah, Sir,  
    And the Continental Congress !

## VI

*Thine eyes grow dreamy in the evening haze,  
    Ticonderoga.  
Where, in mimic art  
Ephemeral,  
Thy pilgrims hold their part  
In festival,  
On what eternal pageants dost thou gaze,  
    Ticonderoga ?*

Soldier and saint and sagamore  
Are vanished from my tranquil shore.  
The ripples that the summer breeze  
Awakes — they are my reveries;  
The day-fly dartles where below  
The *Royal Savage* hides her woe,  
And where the silver lake-trout ply  
Arnold still grapples with Sir Guy.  
On Mount Defiance, looming proud,  
Glowers Burgoyne — a twilight cloud,  
In whose spent shower's radiance  
Macdonough fights the *Confiance*.

Battles whose blood is liberty,  
Heroes whose dreams are history,  
Imagination hath them wrought,  
Tempering all things to a thought,  
Painting the land, the lake, the sky,  
With pageants of the dreamer's eye.

So by my visionary shore,  
Soldier and saint and sagamore  
Live in my shadow evermore:  
Where, rapt in beauty, sleeps Champlain,  
Lulled are the passion and the pain;  
The legend and the race remain.

## TENNYSON <sup>1</sup>

### I

SONG keeps no dim centennial  
Where one who sang lies hushed in earth,  
And Beauty wears not death nor birth  
Though lovers bring her flower and pall;

While Life itself, in endless youth,  
Is sown along sidereal deeps,  
From darkness, where the dreamer sleeps,  
Trembles the morning-star of Truth.

Not to the singer, but to Song  
That lights with viewless finger-tips  
Her flaming music at his lips,  
Those immortalities belong.

Yet to the singer, for the sake  
Of austere service lowly lent  
To make his mind her instrument,  
The flower and pall of song we take.

<sup>1</sup> Written to be read before the Brooklyn Institute, 1909, in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

## II

Among the mighty island-choir  
His 'earliest pipe' was faintly heard  
When still the hearts of time were stirred  
With revolutionary fire,

While lights and echoes still were blown  
Across the darkening lyric sky  
Of Shelley's shrilling ecstasy  
And Byron's orphic organ-tone.

He watched the shuddering Age, aghast,  
Behold the sphinx of Science grow  
A lion vigilant, and throw  
Its shadow o'er the golden past,

Assuming slow an awful Shape  
That stood impassive at the feast,  
Revealing man a mystic beast —  
The evolution of an ape.

---

Still shy he sought his shunning Muse  
Remote from sceptic clash and curse,  
And mixed the palette of his verse  
With nature's mellow gleams and hues,



And crowned his rhyme with bloom of fern  
In fiery orchid palaces,  
And caught in crystal chalices  
Bright spillings from a Grecian urn ;

Till, touched by human lover's hand,  
The singer rose to larger thought  
And took the spurs of Lancelot  
And galloped into Fairyland.

---

But most of olden fair romance  
Is rust on Reason's shining shield,  
And Merlin's hand is weak to wield  
The wand of Science' necromance.

And soon the mage of modern rhyme  
Poured all his alchemy of art  
In newer purpose — to impart  
The noble doubtings of his time ;

And sped the Mediæval ghost  
Of faith, and hailed the love of all,  
The lessening individual,  
The kingly 'common sense of most' ;



And watched, with keen prophetic scan,  
Wild lightnings from the embattled crew  
Of 'navies grappling in the blue'  
Quenched by 'the Parliament of Man.'

Thus on his centenary page  
The Muse has scrolled his name with hers:  
A Prince of old Artificers,  
Knight-errant of the Newest Age.

The poet pales in memory —  
Aloof and proud and book-bemused,  
His Saxon plainness subtly fused  
With pomp of Norman chivalry;

His ashes in the Abbey lie  
Aristocratic in their place,  
But all that lives of him has grace  
Of beautiful democracy;

Near mouldering glaive and oriflamme  
His cerements rest, but he, unwound  
From death, by human love is crowned  
With friendship *in memoriam*;

By many a far and alien beach  
He seeks the holy grail of song,  
Hailed by the Saxon-thinking throng  
The laureate of English speech.

## III

O Song — O Grail of man's desire !  
O living Splendor, never sped !  
Out of the ashes of the dead  
Rise, rise once more in mystic fire !

Reveal for us, for us, reveal  
The Singer in his harness clad,  
And gird him forth like Galahad  
To smite, to chasten and to heal ;

To hallow spear and spade and hod,  
To wrestle manhood from defeats,  
To face the mighty in their seats  
And humble greatness before God ;

To be the bugle of his race  
And blazon through the age again  
Thy music in the hearts of men,  
Thy beauty in the market-place.

## THE AIR VOYAGE UP THE HUDSON<sup>1</sup>

LIKE nothing earthly, on awful wings,  
It burst on the staring million,  
Like a dream of ancient dreadful things  
In the dusk of the time reptilian.

Our hearts beat quick; we spoke not aloud;  
Our minds our senses dissuaded;  
As we saw the bastions of bird and cloud  
By the vision of man invaded.

We caught our breath, as we watched him bound  
Where the air-billow swirls and serries,  
And the shout of our straining hearts is drowned  
In the din of the roaring ferries.

With sliding pinion and whizzing prow —  
His sky-ship the sea birds scaring —  
Like a thought from Liberty's looming brow,  
He flashes and soars in his daring.

<sup>1</sup> Stanzas written on witnessing, from Battery Park, the first flight made by Wilbur Wright in his aeroplane from Governor's Island to Grant's Tomb and back, on the morning of October 4, 1909, during the Hudson-Fulton celebrations.

22 THE AIR VOYAGE UP THE HUDSON

He has flashed; he is gone: only fancy aids  
Our eyes where the haze grows hoarer:  
The Ages look up from the Palisades,  
That looked down on the Dutch explorer.

But what of their dreams — those gray steel hulks  
Deep-moored in the river below him,  
With the loins of a nation girt in their bulks?  
In their iron hearts, do they know him?

Do their deadly engines twinge with a doubt,  
A dread of this thing ethereal,  
That hides in its plumes the earliest scout  
Of the armies and navies aerial?

And what of their hearts — that human throng?  
Do they hail in this creature regal  
The harbinger of dirge, or of song?  
A vulture, or an eagle?

---

He tacks; he returns: the news is blown  
On the winds of a city's wonder:  
He comes, in the braying megaphone,  
He comes, on Manhattan's thunder;

He looms once more by the swarming bluffs —  
A bird of marshes gigantic —  
And slants on the slumbering mist, and luffs  
To his nest by the booming Atlantic.

## CHORAL SONG FOR THE NEW THEATRE <sup>1</sup>

(Written to be sung to music from Gounod's *Redemption*.)

AWAKE! awake! awake!  
Spirits of Aspiration!  
And hasten to renew  
Your ministering vows:  
For lo! the Prince of Faery  
Returns within your walls,  
Back from his ancient bright dominions:  
Awake! awake! awake!  
For he is crowned again.

But who is he, the Prince of Faery?  
Of Hellas he was god, a swan he was in Avon.  
But who is he, the Prince of Faery?  
Of little children lord, of men and angels  
master:

Within the human mind he rules the world.

<sup>1</sup> Sung by members of the Metropolitan Opera Company, at the ceremony of the laying of the corner-stone of the New Theatre, New York, December 15, 1908, and also at the opening ceremonies, November 6, 1909.

## ODE TO THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES <sup>1</sup>

HARVARD PHI BETA KAPPA POEM, 1908

### I

ONCE more amid her mountains and her seas  
American, dream-startled Liberty  
Stares round her, listening. From her mystic  
limbs  
Sleep like a garment slips;  
Between her lips  
Bright wonder trembles momentarily;  
About her knees  
Her ancient streams and shores, innumerable  
With navies and strange peoples, raise new  
hymns  
In her immortal name. Once more she lifts  
Her head in proud resistance, beautiful  
Rebellion: yet not now with martial frown  
To glare through scorching rifts  
Of cannon smoke, smiting her foemen down,

<sup>1</sup> Read in Sanders Theatre, Cambridge, June 25, 1908.

But now, with gaze upturned in the deep sky  
 Whose timeless arc reveals each mortal blur  
 Of her bright image overhanging her,  
 To purify herself, for her least worshipper.

## II

Ours is an age of mutability,  
 A threshold radiant yet sinister  
 Toward strange horizons, where the eternal hills  
 Of ancient law heave, and sink shuddering under,  
 Bursting in giant surf against the base  
 Of vastier summits, newly starred with wonder;  
     And though that portent thrills  
 Our thoughts with dread, or joy, here is our place;  
 Here we must look our common future in the face.

Necessity sounds no alarms, and time  
 No tocsin for his patient siege. To-day  
 No detonation of deep Sumter's gun,  
 Nor lightning musket-flash of Lexington,  
     Nor jangled steeple-chime,  
 Ushers our holy war; but silent-shod,  
     And in the secret way  
 Of human hearts, where in the sordid street  
 The modern slave and master dumbly meet  
     And in the other's eyes



Each, unaware, beholds the eyes of God,  
 That ever after burn and scrutinize  
 The vitals of his soul; or where, defiled,  
 The starless miner barter his own child  
 For mordant drink to quench his questioning  
     mind;  
     Or where, behind  
 The squandered toil of millions, the impeach'd  
     man  
 Puts out his life, to shut away the shame;  
     Still silent as the flame  
     Of serpent fire through autumn grass,  
     The radiant revolution creeps,  
 Impregnating the nation's prone morass  
     With seed Promethean  
     That, kindling, leaps  
 Forth on the peaks of life, aspiring whence it  
     came.

What is that seed? — that living fire?

What mystic name,

What secret shrine,

Revealed, sets free

That sweet and awful Potency,

Which wears, 'neath blasphemy and ire,

'Neath pain and sin and hate and blood,

The hallowed smile of brotherhood?



A myriad names, a myriad  
 Shrines its worshippers have had,  
 Yet whatsoever god men call it by,  
     Still the divine  
 Democracy of man, while man is, cannot die.

Hearken how far  
 The high persuasion  
 Of our renaissance thunders! Groping, dumb,  
 Bowed with old burdens of a continent,  
 Branded with immemorial scar  
 Of sheik and king and khan and czar,  
     They come — they come,  
 Filing, in vast and orderly invasion,  
 The planks of Ellis Island. Who shall tell  
 What numbers thronged the fields where great  
     Martel  
 Marshalled his hordes, or old Arminius  
 O'erwhelmed the Roman legions? — Gaul and  
     Hun,  
 Vandal and Visigoth, behold, for us  
 To-day the humdrum agent, one by one,  
     By sex and ages,  
 Chalk-marks and checks, and down the bright  
     steel cages  
     Passes the hybrid clans,  
 Whose migratory hosts pour forth — Americans.

## III

*Præsides et socii collegiorum!*

Masters and scholars of the chosen places!

I ask of you — to whom

Shall those inchoate freemen, dazzled races,

Turn in their promised land for leadership?

Who shall equip

Their hope with discipline, their nescience

With light, their sudden zeal with reverence?

I ask of you — to whom

The amazed Republic, gazing on this skein

And stuff of destiny,

Pied-shot with human passion, joy and pain,

Shall look to engineer the awful loom,

So that within the fabric of the state

The large ideal of the intricate

Design shall blazon, bold and beautiful,

The gracious lineaments of Liberty?

Flower-sprung from mesas of the prairied land,

Star-strewn along the hills and by the seas —

The quiet-bastioned citadels of peace

And gunless fortresses of freedom — stand

The universities. No breastwork heaves

Its brow in menace near; the ivied gates

Rise moatless; from the campus and the eaves

Perennial youthhood chimes; and all awaits

The coming conqueror. Yet inward shrined,  
     And panoplied  
 With arms more glorious than glaive of Cid  
 Or Charlemagne, the quenchless human mind  
     Sits inexpugnable;  
 While far around, from swarming cities and wide  
     swards,  
 Murmur the vague, aspiring, passion-driven  
     hordes.

Let us not vest with visionary seal  
 Of sanctity the individual.  
     Wherever among men  
 The brave and reasonable citizen  
     Thinks for the common weal  
 And speaks his thought, there the Republic speaks,  
     Yet, if unanswered, speaks in vain.

For ours is a day of coalition: this  
 Our people, viewed with the perspective eye  
 Of revery, appears a titan group  
 Of powers compositive, vast Dramatis  
 Personæ, plying their immortal tasks,  
 'Neath which their Atlantean sinews stoop,  
     In that high Comedy Serene  
 Wherein the Evolutionary will immasks;  
 And there, amid those titan forms of Man —

Their torsos poisèd proud  
 In athlete ease, their foreheads pensive-bow'd —  
 The Spirits of the Universities  
 Enact their corporate rôles American.

Therefore to you, lords of the large demesne  
 Of learning, scholars of well-earned degrees,  
 To you, in your confederated power,  
 Preëminently, the Republic turns  
 And charges you, by your just love of her,  
     To lead, to pilot and uplift  
 Her generations, and administer,  
     With the most holy shrift  
 Of reason and Time's slow amassed dower,  
 Her bright communion to the multitude.

Toward you, in whose calm hands her chalice  
     burns  
 With beauty strange, how many thirst-imbued  
 Gaze, yearning! Not alone on your own walls,  
 Wherein your chosen meet — your shadow falls  
 Also on alien thresholds, thrown across  
 The nation's childhood, by the increasing glow  
 Of truth that flares beyond you. As you sow,  
 So shall the lesser seekers harvest — dross  
 Or substance. In responsibility,  
 You are the true inheritors of kings

Whose sceptres now lie impotent, your halls —  
 The sovran courts of the democracy;  
     And by the royalty  
 Conferred of patient high imaginings,  
     Your first prerogative —  
 And prime efficiency — is leadership.

IV

Who is the scholar-leader? What is he  
 Whose learning shows the unlearned best to live?

There be, who — finger hard on lip —  
 Pore lifelong, with laborious glass,  
 On nature's enigmatic heart,  
 Dissecting shrewdly, part by part,  
 To store her secrets in their scrip,  
 Heedless of human love and art,  
 Or how the passionate generations pass.

Others there are who, moved no less  
     To explore that mute obscure abysm,  
     Make of their probing minds a prism  
         Whose many-sided radiance  
 Illumes with their own hearts the heart of Nature,  
     Touching her darkest feature  
 With revelation for man's happiness,  
     And with love's couchèd lance  
 Wresting from Science a new Humanism.

Such is the scholar liberal: for him,  
 Not knowledge which ignores the Whole,  
 But knowledge grafted in the soul  
     Is scholarship; to esteem  
 His calling justly is to see  
 That culture is proficient sympathy.

For all that issues beautiful  
 From dim retort and crucible,  
 And makes our modern day to seem  
 Arabian night or opiate dream: —  
 Genii, that on the wireless air  
 Transport within imagined waves  
 The cosmic Echo from her caves  
 To work their will, or from the stars  
 Expound the mysteries of Mars,  
 Or in earth's rotting shale prepare  
 The alchemy of radium, —  
 All powers, articulate or dumb,  
 Which scholars probe and sages scan,  
 Are meaningless except to Man —  
 To urge his peace, to ease his pain,  
     And from his mind's domain  
 To exorcise the lurking Caliban.

To exorcise! — Not in the Middle Age,  
 With Faust's redemption, did the devils cease  
 To lure great doctors to their tutelage,



Whereby to lengthen their protracted lease  
 Of the lewd rabble's gaping ignorance :  
 Still, with incessant metamorphosis,  
     The monsters hatch and hiss  
     And, breeding, grow  
 To honor'd stature in the imperil'd state,  
 Where the true scholar still is Prospero,  
     Making their misshaped natures dance  
 Attendance on his master vision : So  
 To humble monsters to the use of men,  
 The foremost scholar is first citizen.

He, when the rank broods teem and generate  
     Their giant seed,  
 That prowl the rich land with impunity,  
 Where corporate greatness stoops to cormorant  
     greed,  
 And that one bulk, much-mouth'd and subtle-  
     gin'd,  
 The unsated Minotaur, Monopoly,  
 Extorts his toll in the meek nation's blood  
     Of boys and maidenhood, —  
 He then, the scholar-leader, pores not stale  
 Upon his book, nor peers where sits the wind  
 In the golden weathercock on Minos' gate,  
 But prescient, girds his clear mind all in mail,  
 And gathering round the time's unperished youth,

### 34 ODE TO THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

Apportions his bright armory of truth  
And points what right-aimed blow shall make the  
beast disgorge.

So did that steadfast captain of our race —  
A storm-trained scholar — stand at Valley Forge  
With all the gales of England in his face,  
And sharing forth his visionary arms  
Of faith with his shorn comrades, smiled, and  
hurled  
Victory through disaster's blind alarms,  
And wrought with fearless mind the future of a  
world.

#### V

O beautiful and spacious one,  
My Country! Spirit free,  
Who floatest wild on that lone eagle's wings  
Fledged in the fiery heart of Washington,  
And fed on heart's blood of each dauntless son  
Of that strong father, how exceedingly  
Fair is thine image, when  
First the least-born of men  
Burns with thy story! Then  
Thou art a presence never darkling: night  
Shrouding thy solemn flight,  
Sprinkles, with hoary rite,



Stars on thy plumage; morn,  
 Ere on the cottage thorn  
 Scarce the shy warbler sings,  
 Fills all familiar things  
 With thy far glory; dreams  
 Of thee at evening haunt the hermit thrush,  
 And in his ecstasy's pure after-hush,  
 High and austere sweet, thine immanent eagle  
 screams.

So by the large compulsion of that Presence  
     I make this invocation;  
 And by the might of that dear name, whose es-  
     sence  
 The staling tongue of usage cannot taint —  
 America — I speak, that I may stir  
 You, her far-ranging universities,  
     Through glad constraint  
     Of love you owe to her,  
 Henceforward to conjoin your destinies  
     In grander federation.

## VI

Not adversaries in the scrambling street  
 Of commerce, need your nobler wills compete  
 For numbers and for names. A saner law  
 Moves your coöperation, and the awe

Of that shall fix a sound stability  
 At the base of civic freedom. Strong must be  
 The scholar in himself. Far better were it  
 Your halls stood empty and their corridors  
 Silent, than that the youth who from your doors  
 Go forth to breed the nation, should inherit  
     The sowings of that spirit  
 Which bows the mind to serve the vulgar mood,  
 Or truckles to the man that owns the multitude.

It cannot be. Never, till now, before —  
 In age of Plato or of Abelard,  
 In empire or republic, linking shore  
 With shore by aspiration's viewless chain —  
 Has your high calling held the fair regard  
 And faith of one vast people. Not in vain  
 Their faith abides in you. The taint which blinds  
 The weak shall not be yours. Your yards and  
     halls

Still with expanding splendor shall be filled  
 By the strong magnet of the sane ideal,  
     And to the common weal  
 Shall speed their generations of glad youth  
 Forth in the land — alumni of the guild  
 Of leadership, the minute-men of truth,  
 Whose muskets are their uncorrupted minds,  
 Clean for their country where her service calls.

## VII

Nobly our world renews, even as in ages gone.  
Man's eras have their vernal equinox  
No less than nature's: Still, on that wild dawn  
When the high winds, unleashed, no longer fawn  
At Winter's knees, but lift his sparse-blown locks  
In haggard wrack — there, on the looming hills,  
Sharp with unearthly light, the sudden flocks  
Show radiant, and on the vista'd sills  
Of Spring, earth's visionary beauty starts  
Revealed: Not otherwise in human hearts  
Recurrent, after seasons numb and blind,  
Freshly the ancient Loveliness reveals  
    The love of our own kind,  
Rekindling in our race the raptures of the mind.

## PROLOGUE TO THE SAINT-GAUDENS MASQUE <sup>1</sup>

PERFORMED AT ASPET IN CORNISH

*Enter IRIS*

IRIS

FRESH from the courts of dewy-colored eve  
Jove summons me before you. Who I am  
And why he bids me here I must declare.

<sup>1</sup> In June, 1905, to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Cornish Colony by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, an outdoor masque was devised and performed by his neighbors in a pine grove at Aspet, his New Hampshire home. In the Masque, written by Mr. Louis Evan Shipman, more than seventy persons took part, among whom were some forty artists and writers of craftsmanly repute, who enacted rôles of Greek deities and demigods.

About twilight, the sculptor with his family and some hundreds of guests were seated in front of a green-gray curtain, suspended between two pines, on which hung great gilded masks, executed by Mr. Maxfield Parrish. Close by, secreted artfully behind evergreens, members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra awaited the baton signal of Mr. Arthur Whiting, conductor and composer of the music.

Then, in the softened light, emerged from between the folds of the curtain the tall maidenly figure of Iris, in many-hued diaphanous veils, holding in one hand a staff of living fleur-de-lis. Iris, enacted by Miss Frances Grimes, the sculptress, spoke the accompanying Prologue.

The three allusions to works by Saint-Gaudens refer, of course, to the Shaw Memorial Bas-relief, in Boston, the Sherman Equestrian Statue, in New York, and the Adams Memorial, in Washington.

My home is half-light; you have watched me  
oft

Through closing lids at noontide, or at dusk,  
Moving between the daylight and your dreams,  
A shape illusory. Whether I pause  
Midway my quivering arc, that spans the roar  
And tumbling prisms of sheer Niagara,  
Or by the ferny banks of Blowmedown  
Trellis my hair with braided fleur-de-lis,  
Still I am Iris, and my mission is  
To shatter the white beam of garish day  
Into a thousand mellower tints of twilight,  
Spinning across the sceptic eyes of reason  
Fine rainbow-films of fancy. Such, then, I.  
But whence, emerging from the curtained wood  
Of Aspet, on this longest summer eve,  
While yet the veerie rings his vesper chimes,  
I have made journey hither, hearken !

Late,

Below the gilded state-house by the bay,  
Sitting his horse in proud simplicity,  
I left a young commander; thronged beneath  
His lifted brow, clouded with battle dreams,  
The eager Ethiop faces onward surged;  
No sound arose from all their trampling feet,  
But the imagined drum-beats rolled in bronze.

From these I passed to where the human hives  
Shadow the stars from the Metropolis,  
Whence, turning homeward from the hell of war,  
Another hero, scarr'd and old, there rode;  
And at his bridle-rein, in maiden awe,  
Went Victory — with pity in her eyes.

A third and Sibyl form, remote and mute,  
Brooding alone beside a secret grave,  
Asked with unopening eyes, "What means it all?"

From these imagined and immortal forms  
To him, O mortals, who imagined them,  
And fixed his revery in stone and bronze,  
I come to render tribute, not of praise  
Superfluous, but playful badinage  
And mock-Olympic mummery, whereby  
If these shall cause the elvish Gallic smile  
To twitch his lip, or stir his blarney laugh,  
The mock-Olympians will die content.

Behold, then, by the enchantment of this staff  
A magic transformation: not such change  
As once my goddess sister Circe wrought —  
Circe, whose spell debased the forms divine  
Of men to bristled shapes of snout and horn:  
Mine is a charm reverse, that lifts, not lowers,  
By power whereof all neighbor Jacks and Jills



That tug their art-pails up these pasture slopes  
Of Cornish are converted here to strut  
In guise of antic gods and demigods.

[IRIS waves her staff, music sounds from the grove.]

Hark now ! 'Tis they, who clamor to begin  
Their frolic masque of satyr, muse, and faun,  
And on the shrine of mirth make sacrifice  
In honor of their only pagan saint.

[IRIS withdraws between the curtains: the music  
grows louder, then dies away. The curtains,  
dividing, open upon the Masque.]

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

KEEP closer to the wall; stop crawling; wait.  
We have our orders. Hold the dynamite.  
I hear their sentry cough. The moon burns white  
Behind the battlements, and cuts each one —  
Turret and tower — an inky silhouette,  
Like paper castle-tops I used to trace  
With scissors as a boy. Step softly! Place  
The bomb here, underneath the garrison.  
Now if their souls are dreaming of hell-fire,  
This will not wake them. Midnight! That's  
the choir  
Of children hailing the Nativity.

*What are ye that walk the night  
Heaven's will divining?  
Shining are your mantles white  
And your staffs are shining.*

*Shepherds, we have come from far  
Dark and danger scorning:  
We have seen our King His star  
By the gates of morning.*



Come now, this is no time for hands to quake;  
On this one breach depends the victory,  
A nation's honor, and her destiny.  
And these, who lie so unsuspectingly  
In sleep, not one of them must ever wake  
This side of —

*What is He whose star ye seek,  
Toilsomely and slowly?  
He is monarch of the meek,  
Regent of the lowly.*

*Wise men, seek another land,  
Shun our lord his greeting:  
For we perish at his hand,  
And our lambs are bleating.*

What a devilish close call!  
There creeps the sentry on the shadow-wall  
Like a black ant. Quick, now — the fuse!

*What are ye who knock by night  
On my palace portals?  
Triple wreaths of silver light  
Crown you like immortals.*

*Herod, from the east we bring  
Fine and lordly treasure.  
Where is He that born is King?  
We would do him pleasure.*

*These your gifts uncover them,  
Myrrh and spice, before me.  
Lo, I am Jerusalem!  
Bow ye down, adore me!*

*King, your shepherds wretchedly  
Starve without your city.  
You Jerusalem may be,  
But our Lord is Pity.*

Quick, fool!

This is our country's job, and you her tool.  
What are you waiting for? You want to think  
Before you kill? You dream that love may link  
All born of woman? Fool, are we the first  
To live in mothers' memories accurst,  
Or in the little children's helplessness?  
These men, like us, know gentle eyes that bless  
Their goings and homecomings, baby hands  
That reach, fine feet that dart, at their commands.  
What, then? This is not murder; this is war.  
We are not men, but patriots. Think no more:  
The fuse is lighted; run! Run for the shore!

*What are ye that screen your eyes  
From the awful burning?  
Look where 'neath His star He lies,  
Nestled by her yearning.*

*Ye that saw His glory shine,  
What were dark and danger?  
Blessed ye that make your shrine  
Mother, Child, and manger.*

*Now the Lord of Love —*

Look back! Look back! How the torn earth-  
clouds blot

The stars, and the far hilltop heaves the roar!

Ah, *Merry Christmas!* Almost I'd forgot.

## THE DEATH OF VERESTCHAGIN<sup>1</sup>

WITH gaze serene and brow of silver rime,  
He watched the up-staring sea and reeling  
land

Converge, as limned beneath the veteran hand  
That last, fell sketch of war was traced sublime;

But even in the act his pencil ruthlessly  
Was snatched away, where — blasting all his  
view —

The inexorable Artist stood, and drew  
The awful masterpiece — reality.

And now the silver rime is on the wave,  
And Verestchagin sleeps with Makarof,  
And calm, above the red brine's eddying  
trough,

The eyes of Christ and Buddha guard his grave.

<sup>1</sup> Vassili Verestchagin, the Russian painter of war themes, while sketching a naval battle off Port Arthur, sank in the warship *Petropavlovsk*, with Admiral Makarof, April 4, 1904.

## SHIRLEY COMMON <sup>1</sup>

Not ours, upon the house-tops, here to claim  
Battles and heroes of historic scene,  
A century and fifty years of fame: —  
Our boast is silence and this day's serene.

The loud circumference of jangling lands,  
Conflict and craft and wrong surround us; still  
Shy in her orchard-wildness Shirley stands:  
A hushed spectator on her mapled hill.

Here to her simple festival she calls  
Her folk home — yet not all: Where are they now,  
The Pilgrim race that piled her corn-field walls,  
And served the Lord with patience and a plough?

The hardy citizens that now are sod  
They may not hear her summons home; and yet  
The elm-hid belfry nestles toward their God,  
And we, who gather here, do not forget.

<sup>1</sup> Read at the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Town of Shirley, Massachusetts, July 30, 1903, in the First Parish Meeting-House.

For still the sights familiar to their eyes  
Are dear to ours: the spires of Groton blaze  
Their weathercocks from Gallows-Hill's sunrise,  
And the long slopes of Harvard slant in haze;

And still, at night, the bittern booms to rest,  
The secret whip-poor-will complains afar;  
And still Wachusett marshals in the west  
The sunset and his solitary star.

Here, then, let thoughts be memories; let our  
    pride  
Be the untainted loveliness, which is  
Our Shirley's dower on woods and pastures pied;  
Let our ambition, even as hers, be this: —

Unenvious, to win the envied bays  
Of nature's health and honest common sense;  
And, by the peace of sane, inglorious days,  
To earn the unrepute of innocence.

## ISAAC WALTON IN MAIDEN LANE

IN that Manhattan alley long yclept,  
With gentle olden music, *Maiden Lane*,  
Where sick and sad-eyed Traffic scarce has slept  
Even at midnight, in her lust for gain,  
Rolling in restive pain  
Through the stern vigil of a century,  
There, mid the din of harsh reality —  
The newsboy's shriek, car's clang and huckster's  
    chaff,  
The cobble's roar, and the loud drayman's laugh,  
And the dull stare,  
The inhuman, hunted glare  
Of the faces — the gray faces  
Of Mammon's stark-mad races,  
Sordid and slattern,  
Modish and tattern,  
Loveless in their misery —  
There, in the midst of all,  
Seated upon a stall,  
Musing on meadows, Isaac, I met thee! —

How my heart stopped for too much happiness,  
To meet thee there in that maelstrom of men,  
Benignant, wise and calm! Ah, gently then  
Came back, in fancy's dress,  
All that of old was sweet,  
Serene and fair, to grace the garish street.  
Musing on meadows now in Maiden Lane,  
The turbid current surging at my side  
Became the flow of 'Thames' sequestered tide,  
The newsboy's cry waned to a curlew's call,  
The jangling pedlar tended tinkling sheep  
Along green hedgerows; even the drayman's  
brawl

Sweetened to an old soliloquy, till all  
That strident world has chastened to a sleep  
Where, in a twilit eddy of my dream,  
Thine image, Isaak, pored upon a bream.



# **THE SISTINE EVE**

**FRAGMENTS OF AN ORATORIO  
WRITTEN FOR THE BEGINNING  
OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

PLAN

OVERTURE

PRELUDE

FIRST CANTO: *The Birth of Eve*

FIRST INTERLUDE

SECOND CANTO: *The Temptation of Eve*

SECOND INTERLUDE

THIRD CANTO: *The Birth of Man*

## PRESENCES <sup>1</sup>

SPEAKING PRESENCES: *The Sistine Spirit*  
*The Spirit of the Vatican*

SOLO PRESENCES: *Adam*  
*The Persian Sibyl*  
*The Cumæan Sibyl*  
*The Delphic Sibyl*  
*Judith*  
*Goliath*  
*Jonas*  
*Jeremiah*  
*Isaiah*  
*The Expelling Angel*  
*Eve*

CHORAL PRESENCES: *The Cornice Cherubim*  
*Symbolic Figures*  
*Botticelli's Women*  
*Shapes in "The Last Judgment"*

## SCENE

*The Sistine Chapel, Rome*

## TIME

*Midnight, before the Dawn of 1901*

*High pontifical mass is being celebrated. Cardinals and prelates in splendid vestments, assembled.*

<sup>1</sup> *These Dramatis Personæ are figures in the paintings by Michelangelo and Botticelli on the ceiling and walls of the Sistine Chapel.*

*“La forza d’ un bel volto al ciel mi sprona  
[Ch’ altro in terra non è che mi diletta]  
E vivo ascendo tra gli spirti eletti,  
Grazia ch’ ad uom mortal raro si dona.*

*Sì ben col suo fattor l’ opra consuona,  
Ch’ a lui mi levo per divin concetti,  
E quivi informo i pensier tutti e i detti,  
Ardendo, amando per gentil persona.*

*Onde, se mai da due begli occhi il guardo  
Torcer non so, conosco in lor la luce  
Che mi mostra la via ch’ a Dio mi guide.  
E se nel lume loro acceso io ardo,  
Nel nobil foco mio dolce riluce  
La gioia che nel cielo eterna ride.”*

*MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI; Sonetto III.*

## OVERTURE

### A VOICE FROM THE CHAPEL CEILING

SIBYLS and prophets of undying art,  
Awake ! for Buonarrotti's golden dome  
Is as an angel's passing-bell, to toll —  
On midnight's starry, tingling silentness —  
The interring of an Age. Wake and behold !  
They bear her toward the never-shutting doors  
Which fearful mortals screen with draperies  
To bar the eternal night. — Lo, she has passed !  
With bead and psalm and solemn catafalque,  
With mitred state, and pomp episcopal,  
The latest of the sovereigns of time —  
Nineteenth among the entombèd centuries —  
Has sealed forever her pregnant lips, and lies  
Sculptured in the cold clay of history.

But thou, O live new-crowned Herculean Age,  
Who clingest to the rugged breast of Labor,  
Gazing with wonder in calm Science' eyes,  
While Poesie, with warm tears on her cheek,  
Searches thy look, in passion lost of pathos, —  
Thou titan child of promise, hail to thee !

And while these spirits, with their serene eyes  
Of strifeless beauty and strong consummation  
[Spirits that pass not with the passing age]  
Chant o'er thine earliest breathing, may the hymn  
Which they shall lift in prayer to the first Mother,  
Be as an exhortation, to incite  
Thy dreams to deeds in thy maturer days.

And now, while all the kneeling prelates pray,  
Spirits, which are my voices, even as the stops  
Are to the lute, awake your harmonies !  
And celebrate the pain and the desire,  
The daring and the victory, of her  
Who set love's seal upon the centuries.

#### A VOICE FROM THE ALTAR

Of *her*? Of whom?

#### THE VOICE FROM THE CEILING

Awake, Divinities !

#### CHORUS OF PRESENCES

Thou whose form crepuscular  
Dawns through the Sistine heaven, as a star  
Through autumn twilight, beautiful  
Our mother Eve —

## THE VOICE FROM THE ALTAR

Peace, painted Forms ! Or if ye, who have sat  
The mute spectators of my solemn Mass  
For vague centennials of memory,  
Now ope your lips inspired, let it not be  
To chant amid these rites pontifical  
A song of sacrilege. — Peace, painted Forms !

## THE VOICE FROM THE CEILING

What art thou there below, with taper eyes  
Upraised from many a prostrate cardinal,  
Who puffest, from thy vast, seclusive cowl,  
Columnar storms of incense ? Whose are thine  
Imponderous and gilded limbs, which show —  
Between the silky folds of surplices —  
Like pillars, sculptured in a pagan shrine  
Or pillaged Coliseum ?

## THE VOICE FROM THE ALTAR

Answer thou !

What voice is thine, visible Aspiration,  
Whose torse, half chiselled from cerulean cloud,  
Outlifts the youthful arm indomitable  
Of David, who at Florence guards the Palace,  
While thy rapt brow hurls the time-piercing gaze

Of Moses, in St. Peter's-of-the-Chains?  
What is thy name, majestic Grace of Power?

THE VOICE FROM THE CEILING

I am the Sistine Spirit. What art thou?

THE VOICE FROM THE ALTAR

The Spirit of the Vatican. My voice  
Is the peal'd organ of perennial Rome,  
And even as those sibyls are thy stops  
So all these red and golden reeds are mine:  
But now, until this sacred mass be said,  
Be silent, thou! or let our requiem  
Be sung in harmony.

THE SISTINE SPIRIT

What discord can  
Arise, when Power prays to Innocence  
And Beauty?

THE SPIRIT OF THE VATICAN

None; but these, thy sensuous choir,  
Dare to uplift their ritual to her —  
To her, whose fluent and unstable mind,  
Impregn'd with lust of new and gloss of beauty,  
Became a fair conception-place for Satan;



To Eve, whose folly wrought the fall of Man,  
Yea, all the dire resultance of his fall.

## THE SISTINE SPIRIT

Man never fell. The inexorable blow  
Of the Expelling Angel was the stroke  
Which first conferred God's knighthood on his  
nature,  
Kindling that anguish, whereby first he rose  
To the protective stature of his soul.  
This Eve first knew was so, when she loved Adam.  
For it was she who first, feeling herself  
A child of God, yearned in her little Eden,  
Yearned for herself and Adam, as true lovers,  
For aims beyond their summer-day self-seeking;  
And even while she grasped the fateful fruit,  
Smiled in the dream of nobler mortal sons  
Instead of an idle immortality, —  
Smiled, and then reached the fruit to Adam, so  
To share with him the awful insurrection.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE VATICAN

Preposterous Spirit! does the fallen race  
Of man fulfil her dream? Reveal to me  
A nobler mortal son, whose angel stature  
Exceeds his father Adam's ere his fall.

## THE SISTINE SPIRIT

Spirit of earthward vision, — even I !  
 Yea, these and I and more than us are Man.  
 Our exaltation doth confute his fall,  
 And build again, in beauty, art and love,  
 Another and inviolable Eden.

Speak ! ye serene and lofty Presences,  
 Delineations of inspired Power !  
 Awake ! ye children of a child of God,  
 And hymn, with your chromatic harmonies,  
 The prelude and the Trilogy austere,  
 Wherein the intuitive grace of Woman's love  
 Enacts the eternal Genesis of Man.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE VATICAN

Strange spirit, they are silent.

## THE SISTINE SPIRIT

Dost thou hear

No sound ?

## THE SPIRIT OF THE VATICAN

No sound ; save only the faint breath  
 Of cardinals, that tell their rosaries.

## THE SISTINE SPIRIT

Hark ! — Hearest thou no mural melody ?  
The playing organ of an ocular sense,  
The hidden choristers of lovely hues,  
The chant of heavenly forms ? — Once more, with  
all  
Thy breathless spirit listening in thine eyes —  
No music ?

## THE SPIRIT OF THE VATICAN

None.

## PRELUDE

### CHORUS OF PRESENCES

O ye wise, love Beauty! All  
Ye strong, revere her!  
Through passion's starry arches thrill  
The echoes of her light footfall;  
The worlds, to do her deathless will,  
Draw near her.

By ways divinely sensuous,  
Her viewless form entices us  
'Mid visions pale and passionate  
To kneel beside her awful gate;  
Where, girt with song and silences,  
The lonely mind her mansion is.

The innocent obey her call,  
The happy know her dreamy face  
And hear her;  
Despair is softened by her grace,  
And sorrow is her worshipper.  
All things that love grow like to her.  
O ye wise, love Beauty! All  
Ye strong, revere her.

## FIRST SYMBOLIC FIGURE

Who draws his face beneath a cowl of cloud  
And kneels beside the altar, dumb and bow'd?

## SECOND FIGURE

That is the Spirit of the Vatican:  
He meditates upon the Fall of Man.

## THIRD FIGURE

But what is he, with countenance beguil'd,  
That smiles upon the sleeping titan-child?

## FOURTH FIGURE

The Sistine Spirit. — See! he draws away  
The incense-curtain from our holy play.

## THE FIGURES

That all the enactments of our mural stage  
May pass as dreams before the new-born Age.

## FIRST CANTO: THE BIRTH OF EVE

### SEMICHORUS OF SYMBOLIC FIGURES

How like a garden lies the world  
The day when love is born;  
Strange beauty glows upon old boughs,  
Strange flowers conceal the thorn;  
And noon and night are tinged with light  
Of unfamiliar morn.

### CHORUS

While with a sense — as though a god were near  
it —  
Of noble languor, droops the lover's spirit.

### SEMICHORUS

So float the trembling hues around  
This maid in Paradise.  
A joy, a reticence, a prayer,  
Clothe with bright poesies  
Her meek limbs, where she worships there  
In God the Father's eyes.

## CHORUS

While, drawing deep from beauty's opiate springs  
A sigh of power, recumbent Adam sings:

## ADAM

As I lay in Eden,  
Alone with Love and Lethargy,  
An immortal maiden  
Was conceived in heaven  
And born to me.

All that I had dreamed  
And sculptured from the cloud-lit skies, —  
All that loved and gleamed  
And sang, in my encircling Paradise, —

The summit's calm,  
The flower's voluptuousness,  
The forest's majesty,  
Night's balm,  
The morning's victory  
And twilight's veiled melodiousness —  
Became a glowing fire  
In me and my desire.

As I lay in Eden,  
My bosom was unfolded;

And an elemental Hand,  
Swift, mysterious and grand,  
    Culled that perfect maiden —  
With all that my wild soul contained  
Of passion peerless and unstained —  
    As erst by heaven she was moulded.

And the maiden, in that place,  
Grew before her Maker's face  
To a form [methought I dreamed]  
Which *was* what beauty only seemed.  
And my lax arm limply pressed  
To my warm and unnerved breast,  
And my brow sank in a swoon,  
And I smelt the scents of noon,  
And I felt the faint winds straying,  
And my heart could scarce conceive  
What the Father's Voice was saying:  
    "Adam, behold thine Eve!"

#### A FIGURE

Hush! — He is silent. Spirits, he has swooned;  
And from his breast bright Eve has flowered forth;  
As when the passion of the nightingale  
Thrills and expands through his eternal arches,  
Recumbent Rome feels the faun-blood of Nature  
Leap in his limbs, while an imponderous rib



Of marble sloth from his immortal heart  
Vast and invisibly is plucked away,  
And from that rent — profuse of ecstasy,  
Exhilarant of life and innocence,  
Trailing bright incense for her naked glory —  
    Outpours the Spring.

## FIRST INTERLUDE

### THE SISTINE SPIRIT

How fair he sleeps — this lordly child of Time !  
In sleep, the soul is in its infancy  
And Power a babe again. But soon the dawn  
Will break, and he will rise to titan-stature.

Meanwhile, within the crystal of his slumber,  
O'erhanging visions pass, as o'er a lake  
The hues of sunset, sweeping across heaven,  
Lay down their splendors in its placid heart,  
And passing, leave no tremor on its face.

## SECOND CANTO: THE TEMPTATION OF EVE

### CHORUS OF THE CORNICE CHERUBIM

The Tree! — Behold the curtain-cloud is cleft!  
The Tree, in all its pride and mystery!  
And smiling on its left  
Content and Innocence, Self-love and Leth-  
argy;  
And on its right,  
Departing into night —  
Anguish, Sin, Death, Love and Eternity!

### A SYMBOLIC FIGURE

Sister of an Orient eld,  
What read'st thou from that parchment, held  
Close to thine eyes, as if thou spelled  
Secrets from all else withheld,  
Or as, at twilight, thou should squint to see  
A form, that moves or stands beyond thy scrutiny?

### THE PERSIAN SIBYL

I trace and read, in Time's obscure abysm, —  
Where cold Imagination, like a prism,

Darts many-colored beams on the carved  
walls, —  
The subtle sorceries of scepticism.  
  
I seek — and vainly through the centuries  
I sought — a fire, which kindled never dies,  
Like that which yonder, 'neath the darkling  
Tree  
Of Knowledge, burns in Eve's uplifted eyes.

## THE FIGURE

Thou, loosened from whose sea-green veil  
The auburn tresses lightly trail,  
While soft thy mantle's azure pale  
Floats round thee, like a filling sail,  
Where rests *thy* dreamy gaze, as though, unfurl'd  
On some Olympic height, it brooded o'er the world?

## THE DELPHIC SIBYL

I dream (and in my dream, I smile)  
Of a maid in Melos' isle —  
How beautiful she was !  
She kept no slave, she wore no crown,  
But all the gods from heaven looked down  
To see her pass.  
  
Her brow was calm, her limbs were free;  
The might of her simplicity

To men seemed more than human :  
A Deity ! they cried ; a new  
Venus ! — But one, who loved her, knew  
That she was Woman.

He wrought her all of marble pure.  
He cried : Thy beauty shall endure  
When Hellas sleeps in clay.  
Behold, O World, thy Womanhood ! —  
They smote the statue where she stood,  
And hewed the arms away.

They buried her both dark and deep ;  
They bade their wives and sisters heap  
Mould on her, with their hands : —  
She rose like light ! The centuries  
Slipped like a garment to her knees,  
And still she stands !

#### THE FIGURE

Sibyl hoar, Enchantress holy,  
Giantess of Melancholy,  
Tell us —

#### CHORUS OF CHERUBIM

Hush !

## THE SISTINE EVE

## THE FIGURE

What awful book  
 (As when some rugged hill  
 Cleaves with a titan's look)  
 Opens beneath thy gaze,  
 Where thy vast, pagan face  
 Is darkened under  
 Night-hues of unreverberating thunder?

## CHORUS OF CHERUBIM

Still! O still!  
 She is not such  
 As tone of mortal song can touch.

## THE FIGURE

Speak, Prophetess!  
 We fear — we guess —  
 What our hearts wait in breathlessness.

## THE CUMÆAN SIBYL

"Tarquin! Tarquin!" — Thousand score  
 They hailed him god and emperor.  
 I entered at his palace door:  
 I looked at him —

## CHORUS OF CHERUBIM

No more! No more!

## THE CUMÆAN SIBYL

I said: I bring thee volumes nine.  
Men name thee lordly and divine:  
Thou *shalt* be — but the price is mine!  
He said: I take no price of thine.

I hurled six volumes in the flame.  
He cried: What price now dost thou name.  
O Prophetess? — I said: The same!  
He frowned; I went the way I came.

He sent for me at set of sun:  
And hast thou burned them all but one?  
And hast no other price? — Nay, none.  
He answered: Then thy will be done!

## THE FIGURE

Speak, Sibyl, speak! What was the price  
Which asked so proud a sacrifice?

## JUDITH

[*Aside to her maid, who bears the head of Holo-  
fernes on a golden salver*]

Hark what she saith!

## THE CUMÆAN SIBYL

The same which yonder, of Eve's eyes,  
The Serpent asks, in Paradise.

JUDITH

I guessed it: — death.

GOLIATH [*to David*]

Death !

\* \* \* \* \*

FIRST CHERUB

Hark yonder, where from wall to wall, two  
Prophets

Converse like oaks in storm across a grove,  
One husht in the roar, one vocal in the lull.

SECOND CHERUB

Which one is silent ?

FIRST CHERUB

He who, browed benign,  
Sits like the Prince of Death, soliloquizing  
With the commanding genius of his soul.

SECOND CHERUB

But the other one: What beetling thoughts are  
his  
Where, like a crag o'erclung by cataracts,  
He murmurs deep in the tortuous folds of his  
beard ?



## FIRST CHERUB

Listen !

## JEREMIAH

I have likened the Daughter of Zion to a comely  
and delicate woman :

The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto  
her round about.

They shall pitch their tents against her ; they shall  
feed every one in his place. —

*Yea, Eve, men are thy shepherds, and thou like  
the Daughter of Zion.*

Prepare ye war against her ! Arise ! let us go up  
at noon.

Woe unto us ! for the day goeth away, and the  
shadows of evening

Are stretchèd out and afar. Arise ! let us go up  
by night,

And let us destroy her palaces. Let us smite the  
city that fed us ! —

*Yea, Eve, men are thy shepherds, and thou like  
the Daughter of Zion.*

## ISAIAH

Yet shall they not destroy her ! But their land  
shall be named Ignorance.

It shall be no more inhabited, but wild beasts of  
the desert shall lie there.

Yea, satyrs shall dance on their hearths, and  
dragons crouch in their palaces.

*For the city is stablished, O Eve, where thy  
dreaming shall have its fruition.*

Where shall the Ignorant dwell? Yea, where is  
the land of their Eden?

The grass thereof shall wither; their heavens be  
closed as a scroll;

And all their host shall fall down, as the leaf fall-  
eth off from the vine.

*But the city is stablished in Man, where thy  
dreaming, O Eve, hath fruition.*

#### CHORUS OF CHERUBIM

The Tree! The smiling, bitter Tree!  
The Tree, in all its pride and mystery!

#### ADAM [*beneath the Tree*]

Where dost thou look, beloved, O my Bride?

Where dost thou gaze beyond and far away?

Dost thou not feel thy lover at thy side,

And the soft winds of this cerulean day?

Why look'st thou so, beloved, O my Bride?

#### THE SNAKE

Lift up thine eyes to mine, daughter of God!

Like birds into heaven let them enter in: —

Behold an angel battling with a cloud;  
The angel is Man; the splendid cloud is Sin;  
The battle is Man's Soul, daughter of God.

## ADAM

Let us go forth into our garden, love:  
The birds are singing and the beasts awaken.  
Dew-laden dreams fall round us from above,  
Like almond-bloom, when breezy boughs are  
shaken.  
Let us go forth into our garden, love!

## THE SNAKE

Eat of the fruit of Knowledge, Child of Eden!  
Of bitter Knowledge, which hath roots in  
death.  
Dare with thy dreams — yea, that which is for-  
bidden!  
For life is but a dream which conquereth  
Its coil of slumber. Live, then, Child of Eden!

## ADAM

Love, there shall be no thought but Thee and Me  
Forevermore. When our two spirits mate,  
Time and the world shall do us ministry  
And all the stars contribute to our state.  
Love, there shall be no joy but Thee and Me.

## THE SNAKE

Behold the stars — and Thee and Me forgotten !  
 Time and the world and other lovers, trem-  
     bling  
 At all the beauty still to be begotten ;  
 Yea, hark to thine and Adam's sons assem-  
     bling  
 To hymn thy deed, when Eden lies forgotten.

\*        \*        \*        \*        \*        \*

## CHORUS OF MALE PRESENCES

We thirst for life, and the more we thirst  
 The swifter the rivers of love outpour  
     To quench us ;  
 Like the living, leaping waters that burst  
 From the Prophet's stroke on the desert's shore,  
     They uprise and drench us,  
     Yet we thirst the more  
     And we joy to thirst,  
 For we count the pain a joy to repay us,  
 When the power of love, which pants to allay us,  
     Quickens again  
     And again, as at first,  
     The infinite rapture the weak call pain.

And we know — for we have sharpened the dull edge  
 Of sense on the sword of the Tree of Knowledge,

And we feel — as Spring feels the sky in the  
sod —

That we are the sons of a son of God.  
And we kindle from that a divine volition —  
The fire of more than a mortal ambition,  
The love of a conflict deep and grand  
Which only Manhood can understand, —  
And we bless the Apple, that erst was accurst,  
And our Mother Eve, who bestowed the thirst,  
Which vaults, like flame, through spirit and brain,  
And courses like vigor through every vein,  
In seeking the joys that the weak call pain.

#### CHORUS OF BOTTICELLI'S WOMEN

We thirst for love, and the more we thirst  
The deeper our spirits and limbs are immerst  
In the beauty, that is love's radiance:  
Out at our eyes, o'er the tremulous brim  
Of our hearts, it beams, as at heaven's rim  
The moon brightens over a lake in a trance;  
Till a peace, more lovely than morning light,  
Makes us grow like lilies, tall and bright,  
From the banks of Sin, which is Ignorance.

And we take an innocent, shy delight  
In the flow of our maiden forms, and the sight  
Of our faces, half glimpsed, half recondite,

And the luminous coils of our looping dresses,  
Which emulate the beauty of tresses,  
And the flower-like grace of our hands; but  
these  
Are the symbols of inner serenities.

For we know [from that piercing intuition  
Which takes from Eve its superb ignition]  
And we feel — by the light in each other's eyes —  
That we are the daughters of Paradise.  
And this sense brings with it a certitude  
Of the immortal aim of this mortal feud,  
And makes us simply reconciled  
With weakness of woman and birth of child,  
And makes our souls, in largess, be  
Self-renderers to futurity,  
With a faith, miscalled fatuity  
By those who love beauty less than we,  
And a passive joy in the present's good,  
And a self-forgetting, understood  
By the heart alone of womanhood.  
And therefore we bless the divinely human  
Heart of Eve, that created us Woman,  
And gave us that insight, which can prove  
Its faith, that ours — while the planets move —  
Are the worship and strength of the men we  
love.



## CHORUS OF SHAPES IN "THE LAST JUDGMENT"

We are the Phantoms, which the exceeding madness

Of mortal Ignorance creates in sadness

Out of the clouds of conflict and of pain.

Horror and Hopelessness, amid the gnarring

And knotted tumult of our rabid warring,

Spawn us, and their own Dark devours us  
again.

Hateful to others, to ourselves abhorrent,

We fume and wrestle, like a falling torrent

That, fearing, hastens its own overthrow;

Or bleakly blown upon by winds eternal,

Like shadowy spirits strewn on shores infernal,

Downcast, we file in diuturnity of woe.

Far from the lamps of Dawn and pure Orion,

We endure the anarch tortures of Ixion —

Immortal anguish: misery! O pain!

Love, send thy light amid our dim abortions,

To show that we are evanescent portions

Of the Mind's mortal battling for the eternal  
gain.

## JONAS

Awful and dazzling Loveliness !

Immortal Render of our mystery !

O World ! O orbèd Time !

O Heaven ! And does my spirit climb  
Beyond them all, beyond them all — to thee,  
Lady ineffable of Love ? — This, this  
It is to love, to dare and to achieve !

Behold, O Eve,  
The consummation of thy bitter Tree.  
Look, mighty Mother ! Even thou didst conceive

This son ! — Thine insurrection leaps in me,  
An effervescing fire, a piercing foison  
Of keen effulgence ! Vision in mine eyes  
Like clouded wine it pours, and in my limbs

Impenetrating joy, subtler than poison,  
And in mine ears — incomparable hymns !

Yea, like a Charioteer, on whirling Time,

I sit sublime,  
And guide, with my majestic left hand,  
The invisible reins of nameless black Despairs  
And haughty Miseries — a chafing band  
That plunge and tremble, like enraged Night-  
mares,  
In the dusk of the Last Judgment; these, like  
steeds,



Propel the triumph of my viewless car,  
And while the purple incense streams from under  
The trampling fleetness of their muffled thunder,  
And while their flanks froth terrors, in bright  
beads,

To dare the goal  
Of my imperious soul, —  
Still guiding them, as with a god's control,  
Over my splendid shoulder turning  
Mine eyes, in giant yearning,  
Upward, my Mother, upward still to thee  
I gaze for power and love and immortality.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE SNAKE [*to Eve*]

Now canst thou doubt the beauty of thy dream-  
ing?

Now canst thou doubt the duty of thy deed?  
Eat of the fruit, O Eve! Thou art redeeming  
The race of Adam to their latest seed,  
For Time shall prove the beauty of thy dream-  
ing.

EVE [*taking the Apple from the Snake*]

O ye Wise, love Beauty! All  
Ye Strong, revere Her!

## SECOND INTERLUDE

### THE SISTINE SPIRIT

Ha ! dost thou shake thy slumber off, young  
titan ?

(Unconscious child no more, for now the dawn  
Proclaims the awaking world.) Ah ! dost thou  
seize

The shadow of my mantle, and in mine eyes  
Gaze with an ecstasy of pain and power ?  
Say, dost thou feel the immitigable blade,  
Which sings in the light above the Tree of Knowl-  
edge,

Upscorch the loveless impotence within thee,  
Ignite thy mind, and scorify thy heart ?  
What ! dost thou reach thy hand thyself to swing  
it ?

Arise ! Go forth ! Youth of the centuries,  
And wield thy sword in prayer to thy great  
Mother !

### THIRD CANTO: THE BIRTH OF MAN

#### CHORUS OF PRESENCES

Eden is fallen !

Man is arisen !

Like a knighted warrior, behold him arise.

Like a waker from slumber,

Like a captive from prison,

He bursts from the bondage of Paradise !

For the Almighty's stroke

Has severed the yoke

Of the beast's contentment and earthward eyes.

#### SONG OF THE EXPELLING ANGEL

Mine is the stroke Promethean !

The infinite love that burns like ire,

The impregnating might, the conceiving fire,

And the pang that delivers the Birth of Man.

I am the life, whose garment is Death,

And Truth like a lining within is laid,

And him who seeks me I singe with my  
blade,

But he weareth the garment and triumpheth.

Adam, depart ! My sword's flame, like a torch's,  
Reveals thy kingdom consumed and  
wrecked,  
But the pain that revolts in thine intellect  
Is the love that heals in the lightning that  
scorches.

#### CHORUS OF PRESENCES

Eden is fallen !  
Man is arisen !  
He is burst from the prison  
Of Paradise !

#### ADAM

Eve, crouch more close to me. I will protect thee.  
The hailing fire my sense like anguish sears.  
The goal is far — but O ! how glorious,  
For through the night thine eyes are still the stars.

## **PART TWO**

**POEMS LYRICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE**



## GROUP I





Two song-birds build their nests within my  
brain,  
And hatch strange broods, each to his own re-  
frain;  
Ever one sings: "To-morrow,  
Sweet Joy!" The other: "Yesterday, sweet sor-  
row!"

FRAIL Sleep, that blowest by fresh banks  
Of quiet, crystal pools, beside whose brink  
The varicolored dreams, like cattle, come to  
drink,

Cool Sleep, thy reeds, in solemn ranks,  
That murmur peace to me by midnight's  
streams,  
At dawn I pluck, and dayward pipe my flock  
of dreams.

## THE ARC LIGHT

I WATCHED an arc light under wind-stirr'd trees  
Sleep on the pale green grass, in tender  
swoon,  
And held my breath thinking the pensive  
moon

Was telling there her lucent rosaries.  
Light of the Arts! no more by lonely seas  
Wandering in naked glory art thou met;  
From out our heaven Homer's moon has set,  
That lit the love-bowers of the Dryades.

Yet 'neath the conscious vestments Time has  
wrought,  
The simple Graces love and act the same;  
And through the subtle wires of labored thought  
The world is lit by heaven's divinest flame,  
Till, in the sordid midnight of the poor,  
The lamp of Zeus illumines a workman's door.

SHE stood before a florist's window-pane.

Roses peered forth and they were envious  
pale,

And lilies, white as cloistered virgin's veil,  
Vied with the deep carnations but in vain.

If at her beauty's heart a lethal stain

Were hid, to beauty's face it told no tale.

"Cut flowers [so she read the sign] for  
sale;"

Half to herself she murmured it again.

One stopped within the sharp, electric light,

And threw his shadow on her and his eyes,

Nor read those sad concealed analogies

Of which her gorgeous, answering look  
was full.

"Cut flowers," and to-morrow they shall blight,

But till to-morrow, God ! how beautiful.

I DREAMED a thousand ages, armed with flint  
And bone and bronze, were toiling in a mint,  
And sculptured rude to see  
On each rough coin they struck was "Poesie."

And now, in that same hall, a mighty wheel,  
Revolved incessant by a mob in steel,  
Showers the round gold thence  
Stamped with the goddess's head "Convenience."

LEISURE, kind Leisure, I require !  
    Leisure, whose snood  
    Of quiethood  
Conceals shy dreams of sage desire:  
    For Leisure, only Leisure,  
Ripens young thought and brings work pleasure.

Dull toil is but a drudge at best;  
    Sloth has no profit,  
    Sleep — still less of it;  
But idle brains are busiest  
    While Leisure, shyest Leisure,  
Ripens young thought and brings work pleasure.

HER eyes are casements clear as dew  
For her kindness to look through;  
There, behind their crystal, stray  
Fairy fancies dressed in gray;  
Through the trellis'd lashes, till  
Slumber draws the silken blind,  
Her quick spirit peeps behind  
The pane, or signals from the sill.

## IN VENICE

THE Lady of the Sunset,  
The Bride of the New Moon,  
She lifts her liquid garments  
About her silvery shoon,  
And as she sways their draperies  
The dim stars interwoven  
In their dark fabric swing and ripple  
Like winds by music cloven.

The Princess of the Olden Isles,  
The Enamored of the Sea,  
She has glided from her throne of stars  
And courtesied, Love, to thee:  
Along her smooth and turquoise halls  
She glides, and kneels with me  
Before thy shrine, with claspèd hands,  
And bows and prays to thee!



## A MATINADE

RISE, sweet signora of the sigh !  
The gondola is gliding by.  
The queenly Adriatic Sea  
Shall hold her mirror, dear, for thee,  
Apollo be thy slave, to twine  
A fillet for those locks of thine,  
And lure the moonlight from thine eyes  
To cool the day-star of his skies.  
So lady dear, be fleet !

And from your dreamy sighs,  
Signora mine, signora sweet,  
Arise !

## TO A GONDOLA

SWAN of the silver beak and sable breast,  
    Stemming the night,  
Art thou a bird of song, or bark of quest,  
    Or heaven-wandered sprite,  
    That in the still moonlight  
Makest in palace courts thy liquid nest?

If bird thou be, what swaying skies are these,  
    Between two heavens,  
That lap thee in their starry lucencies,  
    Whilst thou toward unseen havens,  
    With plumage like the raven's  
Glidest with pinions closed against the breeze?

If bark thou be, what fairy argosies  
    Leadest thou on?  
What amber port of all the sunset's seas  
    Lures thee with music yon?  
    What fêtes of Oberon,  
Tinkling husht joys, twinkling tranquillities?

A sprite thou art — a spirit without peer !  
    A lover's thought  
Thou art, and Fancy is thy gondolier,  
    Whose gliding vision, fraught  
    With song and love, gleams but  
An instant in life's dark, only to disappear.

“IN THE STILL CAMPAGNA.”

IN the still campagna,  
When no birds were singing,  
'Mid the undulating  
Little hills and hollows  
Pied with starred mosaic,  
There I stopped and pondered.

---

Right against the azure  
Of the Alban mountains,  
Rose an overwhelming  
Gaunt and eyeless ruin :  
Eyeless, but the sockets  
Stared on me in sadness.

Loneliness then clutched me  
Like a chill at noonday ;  
Terrors of old Cæsars  
Taught me a new heartache  
Where those walls still on me  
Stared with a stark blindness.

“How ! old earthy phantom,  
Hast thou, then, no solace

When the burning sunbeam  
Chars thy skull like Cyclops' ?  
None ? No inner vision,  
Thoughts that hymn like Homer's ?”

Hardly had I ceased when  
Sudden from the knollside,  
Or perhaps from heaven,  
Through that hollow, lidless  
Ruin flying, rose a  
Flock of songbirds, singing.

---

Love, you are my nature !  
When by lonely broodings  
Long on mortal anguish  
I stand blinded, swift and  
Sweet from lyric fountains,  
Dart then through my sadness  
Songbirds of your soul !

## EARLY MAY IN NEW ENGLAND

STRAWBERRY-FLOWER and violet  
Are come, but the wind blows coldly yet;  
And robin's-egg skies brood sunny chill  
Where hyacinth summer sleeps under the hill  
And the frog is still.

Applebloom floats on the warm blue river,  
But white shad-blossoms ripple and shiver,  
And purple-grackle pipes till his blithe heart  
grieves,  
For his gladdest songs, through the little elm-  
leaves,  
Are but make-believes.

## EARLY APRIL IN ENGLAND

ACROSS the moist beam of the cloud-rimmed sun,  
The larks run up in ecstasies of Spring,  
And little feathered flutes of melody,  
The yellow-ammers, pipe along the hedges.

The sheep, half basking in the golden blaze,  
Half shivering in the gray, engulfing shadows,  
Browse on the faint-green hills; the chilly wind  
Ruffles the white geese on the rippled pond.

## SONG

SPRING is Shakspeare's garden ! —  
In May, to the lover's mind,  
Every rose is a Rosalind  
And every wood an Arden.  
Hark ! "Phœbe ! Phœbe ! Phœbe !"  
Sylvius ! Can it he be ?



## HOLIDAY

WHAT is so free  
As a child in its glee,  
Or a bird on the tree!  
A jumping boy  
Is a wave of joy;  
Little girls,  
That gayly pass  
With flying curls  
Across the grass,  
The soul unclog:  
And oh a sight  
Of rare delight  
Is a running shepherd dog!

## THE KATYDID

THOU husky raven of the insect race,  
    Who hintest — hid by darkness from espial —  
Of some poor maid's disgrace,  
    Cease this asseveration and denial!  
Whatever the black blame, will it abate it  
Thus to incessant rasp and iterate it?  
If Katy *did* the dark deed, let *her* state it.

## THE CRICKET

HARK to the fairy linnet —

How reticent he sings !

Sings, stops ; then, in a minute,

He'll re-begin it,

Then stop again.

The sunset is his dawn :

When day is over,

He pipes a delicate strain

Beneath the tiger-lilies, by the lawn,

Or, from the top boughs of the tallest clover,  
Outpours his Lilliputian carollings.

AT night, I prayed for sleep; instead  
The Muse came, rummaging my head  
For rhymes. Again I craved the dews  
Of sleep; they fell — upon the Muse.

## WITH A ROSE

TO S. A. D.

A ROSE —

From lovely Rhodope's remotest time —  
The poets chose  
To instil a lovelier meaning in their rhyme.

A friend  
Is subtler than a poet. Friendship knows  
A way to lend  
A finer fragrance even to the rose.

## STANZAS

### TO THE BURNISHED GRAIN OF AN OLD-FASHIONED MAHOGANY TABLE

AURORAL tempest on an auburn sea,  
    Scourged by the spectres of unmoving wind,  
Still storm, dumb gale, immured immensity,  
    Dark thunderer upon the shores of mind,  
    Spirit of oceans! — here thou art confined  
In beauty and in silence. Rive thy locks  
    Tumultuous, till thy bronze waves foam in  
    glory,  
    Writhe on till thou art hoary,  
The hush-air'd chamber shall not feel thy shocks,  
Nor thy smooth polished shore thereby be under-  
mined.

Wild harrier of the mad atmospheres,  
    Whose looks are lightnings, who hath cap-  
    tured thee  
And poured in wood this sunny wrath of tears?  
    Who else but mirror-cinctured Nature, she  
    That lurks by rivers and the placid sea

To prison-in the silent-roaring thunders  
    With pomp pictorial. In such still state  
        Art thou incarcerate,  
And Time, whose sitting worketh mellow wonders,  
Thy jailer sits, in cell of dark mahogany.

The terrors of the guessed invisible  
    Are worse than seen calamities; the eye  
Beholds not here the famine-screeching gull,  
    The ear knows not the night-wreck'd sea-  
        man's cry,  
Yet may the fancy hear his monody  
Sung by the mermaids of those amber deeps,  
    Beneath whose burnished and congealèd  
        waves  
        A lurid dragon raves,  
Whose dropping eye with ruddy tinctures steeps  
That marvel-teeming world in strange mortality.

Tempestuous sea, dash on ! Roar on, dim tides,  
    That come, or go, or stay, — we are not  
        stirred;  
The dark-descending simoon o'er thee glides,  
    But to the wooden'd sense it moans are surd.  
Even while we gaze, our inward eyes — grown  
    blurr'd, —

Behold thee for illusion, that reproves

Our reason's folly, till we ask: why should

We sympathize with wood?

Yea, thou art like a passionate heart that loves:

Wildly it beats upon the world, but is not heard.



## SUNSET

BEHOLD where Night clutches the cup of heaven  
And quaffs the beauty of the world away !  
Lo, his first draught is all of dazzling day;  
The next he fills with the red wine of even  
And drinks; then of the twilight's amber, seven  
Deep liquid hues, seven times, superb in ray,  
He fills—and drinks; the last, a mead pale-  
gray  
Leaves the black beaker gemmed with starry  
levin.

Even so does Time quaff our mortality !  
First, of the effervescing blood and blush  
Of virgin years, then of maturity  
The deeper glow, then of the pallid hush  
Where only the eyes still glitter, till even they —  
After a pause — melt in immenser day.

FOR F. J. L.

THE flower shall fade, not the spirit  
Which gave to it being;  
That has finer forms to inherit  
Beyond our mere seeing.

Oh, why does the lily seem fair?  
For seeing? for smelling?  
Or is it that Ariel there  
Has found him a dwelling?

Stale flowers for me shall not sere,  
If you do but give them;  
Slight thoughts for me shall be dear,  
If you but conceive them.

TO M. AND M. L.

I CANNOT think good-by;  
How can I say it?  
My heart's debt lies too nigh  
For words to pay it.

Bright cloud, that flingest wide  
The heaven's wonder,  
Dark cloud, and dim hillside,  
And far-voiced thunder,

Soft breeze, that ringest clear  
The sweet day's knell,  
Sad bird, that singest near, —  
Speak my farewell!

## BALLAD

### I

YOUNG rider and steed they dash on through the  
dusk,  
And the fog gathers gray as the mould on the  
husk,  
And the froth on the flank is like foam on the flood  
Where the brown stream pours panting through  
dark underwood.

“But what of the night, love, and what of the  
miles,  
When the morning shall break in my true love’s  
own smiles?  
Oh, I’d ride the white charger that neighs from the  
sea  
To the edge of the world, if she waited for me!”

Dim head in the doorway it hears him dash by,  
And the cold smile curls keen, and the laugh  
lights the eye:

“Ye’ll hae off wi’ your league-boots and love by  
the sea  
When your bonny hair’s white and ye’re wiser  
like me.”

## II

The flare’s in the chimney, the song’s on the  
crane,  
And the maiden sits watching the fog on the  
pane,  
And the hot glowing hearthlight is cosey and dry,  
But the warm light that’s tender’s the light in her  
eye.

“Nay, granny, I’ll just take a step from the sill,  
For the twilight is cold, and the mist hides the  
hill,  
And fain would I warm the whole world with my  
heart  
To comfort thee — O my dear love — where thou  
art !”

“Ye’ve let the winds in, lass ; the candle is out !  
Now God send ye wisdom, whate’er ye’re about !  
The parritch is cold, lass, that erst was sae hot :  
When ye’re older ye’ll be a deal wiser, I wot !”

## III

There's a leap in the mist; there's a voice in the  
night;

There's a step that is heavy with one that is light:

"Ah, *love*, dear, is wisdom, and wisdom is this:

The seals of your sages—they melt with a kiss!"

EVEN as an infant fingers the crisp sheet  
And crumples it, the more his milk is sweet,  
So we, with restive hands, in happy sleep  
Enact vague deeds on Nature's cover-slip.

## A CHILD

BRIEF Revelation of enduring Truth,

Frail snowflake in the silent storm of God,  
Scarce lighting on the swallow-wing of youth  
Ere wafting down to dew the pregnant sod,

Infant! or Angel else — thine innocence

Is as a crystal, wherethrough men may see  
The seedling's might, the star's magnificence,  
And of our common day the mystery.

More, it enkindles might; and like the pure

Polished convex of a bright burning-glass,  
Binds the wild hues and lightnings, which endure  
In love as heaven, and in concentric mass

Ignites by them the unfeeling dross of nature  
To conflagrations heavenly in stature.



## BABY PANTOMIME

SERENE, he sits on other shores

Than ours: with wide, unconscious lands  
He holds strange speech, or, silent, pores

On denizens of viewless strands;  
On tablets of the air weird scores

He writes, and makes, with eager hands,  
As strange erasements; then, two-fisted, stores  
An elfin hour-glass with heavenly sands.

## THE FIRST TOOTH

DEAR babe, that this should be ! Whence should  
this come ? —

This horny 'scutcheon of an eld orang,  
Where through the tender coral of thy gum  
The wee, sly beast has peeped his prying  
fang :

Colossal meditation ! Can this be  
The cropping of that seed which Cadmus  
sowed ?  
Or that gaunt emblem of mortality  
Under the sickle, on our earth-abode ?

Forbid it, heaven ! 'Tis but the nursling thorn  
That nestles near the bloom of every rose,  
The curling holly-leaf's keen-sharded horn,  
The stubborn shield of beauty's frail repose,

The official mace of angels : even as the Lord  
Guarded the grace of Eden with a sword !

## THE DESERTED STEEDS

MIDWAY the silent parlor plain

The iron horses stand, nor turn,

But like the yoke that Putnam left,

Await, mid-field, their lord's return.

There they have stood since yestereve —

Nor champed, nor broke their traces — till

The moon looked in the western blind,

Till morn peeped o'er the eastern sill.

Then strides their lord to field again

To crack his whip and drive his teams,

Back from the far campaigns of sleep,

The baby Bunker Hill of dreams.

## THE CHILD AND SLEEP

THIS baby brow, like a smooth handkerchief,  
Has in the night been ironed white and even,  
And all these little limbs, beyond belief,  
Are like sweet garments, fresh prepared in  
heaven

To clothe the littlest angel loved by Mary.  
Who was it smoothed these rose-habiliments  
Of childhood? — Sleep, a gentle nurse, and fairy,  
Who folds the crummings of our discontents,

And lines Day's chest with viewless lavender  
To sweeten all the vestments of our care.  
All Nature's tired children turn to her  
For renovation; for she can repair  
The outworn body, from her secret scrip,  
And minds outworn seek her physicianship.

## SUMMER SONG

THE cricket is chirring,  
The tree-toad is purring,  
    The busy frog pipes,  
The beetle is whirring,  
    And curled in his nest,  
    'Mid the night dew of rest,  
My wee one is stirring.

*Then quick, Fairy Hummer,  
Lull my newcomer  
    Rosy and deep  
    In sleep, soft sleep,  
'Mid the sweets of the summer.*

The stars at bo-peeping  
Like white lambs are leaping  
    On the hills of the dark  
In the Good Shepherd's keeping:  
    Their wool is like silk,  
    And they pour their bright milk  
For my little one's sleeping.

*Then hush, Fairy Hummer!*  
*Kiss my newcomer,*  
*And cradle him deep*  
*In sleep, soft sleep,*  
*'Mid the sweets of the summer.*

## FIRE WORSHIP

A POPPY, all on fire with beauty's beams,  
    Outburned the glamour of the liquid bar  
    Of sunlight where it swam, diffusing far  
The brilliance of its spiritual streams:  
A chalice, spilled on some blood-stained trireme's  
    Prow, in libation to the sanguine star,  
    The ritual cup of dread Dyauspitar,  
Brimmed with the wine of its own opiate dreams.

Before that shrine, in mute idolatry, —  
    A little Gangean god, an orient  
    Cupid, rose-flushed with infant wonder-  
        ment —  
The baby gazed, and reached in rhapsody  
His small, translucent hands, while silently  
    From flower to face a rubiate nimbus went.

PLASTIC Fancies, form a mould:

Fill it, Heart, with burning gold:

Break it, Love, when life is cold.

When the shard is struck away,

There shall stand — where once was clay —

Beauty, till the Judgment-day!



## THE UNSAID

THE forms sublime, the moods elate,  
That rise within the poet's reach,  
May never transubstantiate  
Their glowing ardors into speech.

Yet sweet — although we fail in words —  
To feel the changed, creative light  
That gleams on nature's fields and herds,  
Cast by a sun of inner sight,

While burst upon the exultant brain  
Visions of grandeur and of grace.  
He gazes more serene on men  
Who looks the Muses in the face.

I WATCHED a drama, sitting in the wings,  
And heard the plaudits of eternal things:  
But when the Prompter bawled  
My name, I failed my cue — nor was recalled.

ALL joys, familiar and divine,  
All satisfactions fail, save thine,  
    Contemplation !  
Ambitions climb and fall ;  
Love, and Hope, his thrall,  
Pity, and our noblest passions pall ;  
    Yea, one and all,  
    Each one.

Not Venus, wreathed with bloom and vine,  
Glows with rapture like to thine —  
    Meditation !  
The rose can never be  
Sweet as our revery  
About her. Lord, each deity  
    Bows down to thee,  
    Each one.

WHEN subtle passion makes me slave  
And leads me, in her golden chain,  
Where dazzling legions of the grave  
Troop in her spurious beauty's train,  
Poetry, make then thy sign —  
Lord and Sovereign divine !

The beast wears still his tusk and snout ;  
Man merely has dispensed with these.  
The satyr leeringly looks out  
Behind the mask of Socrates ;  
Thou only art of heavenly line,  
Lord and Sovereign divine !

When, therefore, orient-vestured Sin  
Holds her usurping court in me,  
Set thy white torch aflame within  
Her palace walls, O Poetry,  
And on their ashes build thy shrine,  
Lord and Sovereign divine !

## THE SLINGER

### I

A BOY, who stoops upon a green hillside,  
Where he has climbed, exhilarant and flushed,  
And picks up a flat stone, shell-shaped and  
smooth —

A piece of splitty slate, or curved feldspar —  
Scanned with the relish of an expert eye,  
And fits it in the hollow of his hand,  
And sways his body for the joyous fling —  
How wondrously he shoots it through the air !  
How pent with song it soars into the blue  
Stored with the frenzy of his boyish whim,  
Skims the sunk summit of the tallest pine,  
Rounds, dips, tacks, turns, then, twirling, soars  
again,

Catching the sunlight like a swallow's wing;  
Then, like the last dip of a 'cellist's bow,  
Or a ground-sparrow, slacking to its nest,  
Slants the long slope, and dives in to the vale.

Not more inspired the pebble David slung!  
A stone, a lump, a clot of hardened loam,  
Yet, in an instant's metamorphosis,  
It leaps to beauty like a work of God —  
A lyric thing, a fellow of the lark,  
Breathing a moment's immortality —  
Then sinks to silence and the loam it left.

## II

Whose was the hand which flung me into breath?  
Whose was the whim or purpose of that deed? —  
Flung in the dizzy zenith of clear mind,  
Whirled in the cloudy vortex of dark will,  
On, on — projectile of a deathless youth,  
Poised with his sling upon the brow of heaven —  
Skimming, and skimmed by other whizzing clay,  
Skipped in the sun to caper caracoles,  
What is of man the ultimate Goliath,  
Giant of Ill, whom he must batter down  
That Saul the Right may reign? What is man's  
goal?  
Or — mindful of the grim analogy —  
What stricken pine, forgotten in the forest  
That skirts the valley underneath Time's hill,  
Shall mark his accidental tumbling-tomb?

## LIFE SAID TO DEATH

LIFE said to Death: 'Brother,  
Who was our mother?  
Did not One who bore us  
Make the world for us:  
Were we not twin-born?  
What hast thou, then, inborn  
Lordlier, vaster,  
That thou playest master?  
By what right or merit  
Dost thou inherit  
Earth's beautiful riches?

Answer me: Which is  
The world's more deserving —  
The served, or the serving?  
Thou art a depender  
On me, yet a spender  
Of all my dear earnings,  
Rhapsodies, yearnings.

I build, thou breakest;  
I bring, and thou takest;  
I save, thou lavishest;  
I love, and thou ravishest.

Deaf and disdainful,  
Thou leavest me baneful —  
Curst all I care for.  
Answer me: Wherefore?

O, say that thy spendings  
Are used in befriendings;  
That 'neath barbarity  
Thou workest in charity,  
To joy givest feeling,  
And a quick healing  
To pain's slow cancer.  
O, loosen the tied knot  
Of silence, and answer! —'

But Death replied not.



OLD Age, the irrigator,  
Digs our bosoms straighter,  
More workable and deeper still  
To turn the ever-running mill  
Of nights and days. He makes a trough  
To drain our passions off,  
That used so beautiful to lie  
Variegated to the sky,  
On waste moorlands of the heart —  
Haunts of idleness, and art  
Still half-dreaming. All their piedness,  
Rank and wild and shallow wideness,  
Desultory splendors, he  
Straightens conscientiously  
To a practicable sluice  
Meant for workaday, plain use.  
All the mists of early dawn,  
Twilit marshes, being gone  
With their glamour, and their stench,  
There is left — a narrow trench.

As children fling bright silver in the sea  
To watch it shine and sink there, so do we  
Our treasures of wrought rhyme  
And marble toss amid the surge of time.

## **GROUP II**



## CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

OUT of the 'obscure wood' and ominous way  
Which are our life, to that obscurer sea  
Whose margin glooms and gleams alternately

With storm and splendor of the shrouded spray —  
He has departed. Our familiar day,

His elm-hushed, ivied walks, no more shall  
see

That radiant smile of austere courtesy:

On Shady Hill the mist hangs cold and gray.

He has departed hence, but not alone:

Still in his steps, where golden discourse  
burns,

To Virgil now he speaks, and now he turns

Toward Allighieri in calm undertone,

Holding with modest tact his path between

The Mantuan and the mighty Florentine.

FRANCIS JAMES CHILD

How fain we conjure back his face ! How fain  
As, bowed with musings long on elvish lore,  
He clutched his satchel at the class-room  
door  
And shot the quick "Good-morning, gentlemen,"  
From under the bronze curls, and entered. Then  
For us that hour of quaint illusion wore  
Such spell as when, beside the Breton shore,  
The wizard clerk astounded Dorigen.

For we beheld the nine-and-twenty ride  
Through those dim aisles their deathless pil-  
grimage,  
Lady and monk and rascal laugh and chide,  
Living and loving on the enchanted page,  
Whilst, half apart, there murmured side by side  
The master-poet and the scholar-mage.

## TO GEORGE PIERCE BAKER

THE ghosts of Praise-God Barebones and his  
clan

Still walk, and with their old acerbity

Infect us; even the University

Is haunted still, and the sparse Puritan,

Turned Prospero, has made a Caliban

Of human passion, and wild Poesie

Pinched in an oak to starve, and Mimicry

And all her kindred Muses put to ban.

Yet not so now at Harvard; there betakes

Him now the scholar-player, with his Muse

(That deathless wench, the Mermaid) and  
renews

His vows, and breaks his fast, and is  
restored

By our own Baker. — May the loaves he bakes

Soon pile a feast at Master Shakspeare's  
board !

## TO WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY

MOODY, our time is glad of you; 'tis given  
(After exotic, ineffectual blows)

For you, a poet, with sure blade of prose  
Keen from the artist's scabbard, to have riven  
Our specious theatre from its roof-beam even  
Unto the pit of smugness, to disclose  
The emancipated desert's wild repose —  
The new-world gladness of our native heaven.

Henceforth we cannot be the same; for us  
Americans, because of you, the tide  
Dramatic turns to seek its heritage  
Splendidly homeward to ourselves; our  
stage  
Is cleft: between its pusillanimous  
And daring goals stands now the Great Divide.



TO THE SAME, AFTER SEVERE ILL-  
NESS

Now that you are come up from the hush vale  
Whose crumbling verge hugs close the dread-  
named stream,  
And we, for whom your sojourn there did  
seem

A time intolerable, may inhale  
Glad breath to greet you on the old firm trail  
Of health again, still that suspense extreme  
Pervades our deep thanksgiving, like a dream  
Of Him whose thin hand felt the sanguine nail.

For not alone the sentient personal  
Pang that was spared compels our gratitude,  
But that contagious loss which would  
have spread,  
Unknown, to those who knew you not, through  
all  
The after-time; but now, that dread sub-  
dued,  
With victory life girds you, garlanded.

## TO GEORGE GREY BARNARD

HEWER of visions from our human clay,  
Hewer of man's strong soul in sentient stone,  
Of maiden limbs, like breath of flowers new-  
blown,  
Of mighty loins, girded in giant fray,  
Of hearts that wrestle, vanquish, fall and pray —  
Hail to you, dauntless Hewer! Not alone  
Your arm is raised to shape the vast un-  
known:  
A nation's sinews hold that arm in sway.

Though from Carraran hills, by alien hands,  
Those forms of plastic vision are unfurled,  
Yet in their glowing, marble chastities  
America in naked splendor stands  
Inviolatè, and looms across the world —  
Labor's impassioned apotheosis.

TO AUGUSTUS FRANZÉN<sup>1</sup>

HAD poet Geoffrey been a painter then  
In Richard's days, he would have painted  
true,  
Healthful and bold and beautiful, like you  
Franzén, large-souled, sure-handed. Had Franzén,  
Painter in oils, wielded an English pen  
To-day as artist, he would limn anew  
Even such a clear-eyed Canterbury view  
As Chaucer limned of nature and of men.

So, when I watch, anew, my little son  
Take breath beneath your brush, and pout  
again  
His arch and fresh-eyed innocence, I  
stand  
Silent, and take your hand in mine, as one  
Who, in Old London, or Velasquez' Spain,  
Held in his own a living master's hand.

<sup>1</sup> With a copy of "The Canterbury Pilgrims."

TO J. E. F.

Is this our common world of weariness —  
    The narrow stream we fume and struggle in?  
    Soft as a sleeping ocean and serene  
The quivering city slumbers, measureless  
Under the moon: the roaring paths men press  
    By day, are sweet with silences, akin  
    To dying murmurs of a violin:  
Such magic has the moon to calm and bless.

The mind, too, has its moonlight, which can  
    steep  
    Time's sordid commonplace in harmony  
    That heals pain with oblivion, and the  
    scar  
Of garish strife with beauty, and the deep  
    Rebellions of the soul with sympathy:  
    Such might has quiet friendship's mystic  
    star.

## THE HILL-SPIRIT

TO R. B.

RIBBED like a conch and ruddy through the dark  
The frail wedge of his horn-clear tepee glows  
Above the pasture-cliff, warm with the rose  
Light of its own live heart: outside the stark  
Grove clicks the wampum of its frozen bark  
Against the starry cold; a shadow shows  
Tall in the tepee's slit; then in the snows  
Valeward husht moccasins imprint their mark.

Blithe with the wonder of their home wood-fire  
The hillside children, rapt in fairy lore,  
Hark suddenly his footstep: giant-  
geared,  
He stands before them; then upon the floor  
Seated beside them, like an immortal sire,  
Laughs — with one great hand tangled  
in his beard.

TO R. E. F.

ARCH twinklings of the quaint wood-smile of Pan,  
Far-trembling, golden lights from Jason's  
fleece,  
And lyric breathings from the lutes of Greece,  
And gentle ardencies from old Japan,  
With whatsoever blithe, Arcadian,  
And simply wise accord with such as these,  
Are blent in you to one true Yankee piece,  
Keen, classic, laughter-brewing, Keatsian.

By forum, Alp and oriental fane  
(As varied climes color the song-bird's  
wings)  
On you far paths and fair imaginings  
Have traced their retrospects; yet, if  
there be  
One word by which to conjure you up plain,  
That fine home-word is Hospitality.

TO E. H. S.

BRIGHT in the dark of sleep all night till morn  
The henchmen dreams about my bed did sit  
And looked on me, with their strange torches  
lit;

And one was passionate, and one was lorn,  
And one, that fingered his bronze beard in scorn,  
Scowled at another's smile of tranquil wit;  
And all were dreams of heroes yet unwrit  
In dramas high, and pageants yet unborn.

O happy knight ! immortal retinue !  
What may we not, when morning breaks,  
achieve !

The morning breaks — ah, pale and strengthless  
crew !

Who now shall in your mighty forms believe ?  
Dear friend and host, even you ! My dreams  
I leave,

(Those happy dreams) to serve and honor you.





### GROUP III



FAIR is the foreground of her soul  
    With mirth and domesticity,  
And vistas far, through cottage vines,  
    Of a storm-lit, pagan sea.

A bluebird nests beneath the porch,  
    A hidden song-sparrow, hard-by,  
Sings near the ground; but overhead  
    A gull's wing glitters high.

Rose-fragrance dreams along the hedge,  
    Wild sea-tangs drift from off the wave,  
And girlish trebles sweetly pierce  
    The eternal ocean-stave.

My love was freshly come from sea  
The morning she first greeted me :  
The salt mist's tang, the sunny blow  
Had tinged her cheeks a ripening glow.

She bowed to me with all the ease  
Of meadow-grasses in the breeze,  
And yet her look seemed far away  
Amid the splendors of the spray.

Her step was vigorous and free  
As maiden's in the Odyssey ;  
And when she laughed, I heard the tunes  
Of rushes in the windy dunes.

An air so limitless, an eye  
So virgin in its royalty —  
Hers was a spirit and a form  
That took my inland heart by storm.

I felt an impulse, an unrest,  
And secret tides within my breast  
Flowed up, with silent, glad control,  
And drew the rivers of my soul.

THE soft rains are falling  
    On wild rose and vine;  
The far winds are calling  
    To foreland and pine;

The big wave is rocking  
    The gull on its breast;  
The surges are knocking  
    With joyous unrest;

There's a spirit in the sky, love,  
    That pants for the sea,  
But the heart that beats nigh, love,  
    Beats higher for thee !

SHE was a child of February,  
    Of tree-top gray and smother'd stream,  
Of cedar and the marsh rosemary,  
    Of snowbird and the sunset's dream.

A frozen brook that, April-eyed,  
    Sings soft beneath its silver fretting,  
Her lyric spirit soon belied  
    The ice of her New England setting;

Till on a day when sudden thaw  
    Rent all her snowy chains asunder,  
The impassioned sun beheld with awe  
    Her heart of deep Italian wonder.

Still Nature has described her best,  
    Veiled in those February skies,  
With summer singing in her breast,  
    And April laughing in her eyes.

I HEARD the waves exulting in their power,  
    Their unpaced leagues of dim immensity,  
Their splendors and their thunders and their  
    dower  
Of heaven's far glory, and I thought: — the  
    sea,  
The sea is mighty ! Yet, O Love, to me  
Who sought a symbol, meagre was that might  
    Which was encliffed and shored, for vaster be  
The tides of love ; not beach nor beacon-light  
Marks where their surges clasp the misty infinite.

## MAID-MARINER

THE ragged clouds are all a-rout,  
And the white gulls reel like swallows,  
And the billowy herds, at Triton's shout,  
Plunge snorting down the hollows,  
And my heart is with the storms a-stir  
For Marian, my maid-mariner.

The spray is whiffed by the sneezing wind  
Where the dory's prow is ducking,  
And souging where the cliff is brined  
The seaweed-cows are sucking,  
And the wild-duck flocks begin to whirl,  
Marian, maid-mariner !

Then come with me to the green salt tides  
When the storms have slipt their traces,  
And the live blood vaults in our glowing sides,  
And the winds flap in our faces,  
And hearken to my heart's harbinger,  
Marian, maid-mariner !

O, if the world were all a bark,  
And wishes all were true, love,  
With one blithe maiden I'd embark —  
Her captain and her crew, love —  
And sail the world away with her:  
My Marian, maid-mariner !



OUT of the drenched and leafless night, my dear,  
    Entering to you—like hot-haste March I feel,  
Who bows before the beauty of the year,  
    And spurns presumptuous Winter with his  
    heel.

My thoughts are like pied cattle on the hills,  
    Browsing the pale green slants, through silt-  
        ing mist  
That laps the verdant uplands, and far fills  
    The valleys where the parted woods have  
        kisst.

Scarce can I see them for the purpling rain  
    That drives across the pastures, where they  
        loom  
Beyond the hedges of my shrouded brain,  
    Herding the solemn sunset of my gloom.

O Fancy, be my eager-lung'd Boy-Blue,  
    And blow upon your dewy echo-horn  
A blast to call them home to me and you  
    Out of the eerie meads and magic corn;

For they shall yield us white abundance of  
Their milk, for me to bring unto my love.

WHEN beauty ripens newly in old sheaves,  
    Wears purple 'mid the vine's cold penury,  
And hides young blushes in age-altered leaves,  
    I take one more excuse to think of thee,

Conceiving this: the harvest's mellow gold  
    Shall gleam, though faded harvests feed the  
        swine;  
The sheaf's bright glance shall shine in brandies  
    old,  
    The dark grape's splendor glisten in the wine.

So, too, when thou art withered from the earth,  
    And loveliness no habitation finds  
In thy beloved form, yet shall thy worth  
    Still glow with living lustre in men's minds.

O then to be thy vintager I ask,  
And every verse of mine thy beauty's flask !

WHEN first the pussy-willow shows  
    Her fairy muffs of gray,  
While still amid the poplar tree  
The blithe, familiar chickadee  
His morning suet gratis gets, —  
When first the consternating crows  
Break on the winter-keen repose  
    Of February day  
    Their strident cawings,  
Startling with Stygian silhouettes  
    The virgin snows  
    To wake, and with faint thawings,  
    Like speech half-audible,  
Murmur of spring, until we houslings feel —  
    Or dream we feel — the breath  
    Of blowing violets,  
That start where the old oak-leaf floats to death,  
    At such a time —  
On this your birthday morning, winter-weary,  
    Once more the stealing rhyme  
Runs up within my heart, to greet you, dearie.

For now through all of nature that we love  
A vernal change, like love's, has late begun;

The northing sun  
That nightly from Ascutney shall remove  
Farther its setting, fills  
The valley-chalice of the Cornish hills  
With wine of warmer splendors; by woodways  
Those spurting flames of blue, the jays,  
Less oft the eye and ear amaze,  
Mock musical, with gong-like throat,  
Ringing the red-wing'd blackbird's note;  
More seldom sounds the frosty axe,  
And by the rabbit-run  
Our quaint embroideries of snowshoe tracks  
Grow softly blurred and charr'd  
On their south edgings, while the logging-bells  
Tinkle less coldly through the hemlock dells.  
Or cease, amid snow-muffled lumber-stacks,  
Where sledges come to "Whoa !" in the mill-yard.

Therefore, because this lovely season leaves,  
Like all else, only memory to take  
Joy of its vestiges, now for the sake  
Of fleet delights that never may return,  
Watch, dear, with me, where, 'neath the dropping  
eaves

The iris-dewed icicles burn and burn,  
Till beauty on our minds indelibly  
Shall brand her image, bright with mutability.

STEEP ran the hill-road out of the wood:

Lambent, below us  
Flushed in the valley  
Snow-colored twilight —  
Black isles of pine.

Hushed the cold tinklings, shuddered the sleigh:

Round the horizon,  
Keen and auroral,  
Burned on the hill-lines  
Inexpressible rose.

Snorted the silvery breath of the horse:

Into the silken  
Quivering silence,  
Slid like a snowflake  
Saint Agnes' moon.

## A BIRTHDAY

(FOR S. S. P.)

SEVENTY years !

What memories are the peers  
Of such a service ! Who shall send  
Awed messengers into the vast of mind  
To summon them ? Or who shall find  
And herald their grand reticence ? — If hours  
Are sometimes epochs, if there are  
Minutes, which rise like Babylonian towers  
Above time's sordid plain, who shall declare  
The grandeur of this life ? What angel compass  
it ?

Not words, but smiles and tears  
Can hail, with homage fit,  
Those seventy years.

ONCE more Chopin and Mendelssohn  
Have conjured you, sweet Mother !  
How playfully you charmed the one,  
How pensively the other,  
As, standing tiptoe on the stair,  
I watched your waving golden hair !

Again I watch the flashing keys —  
A dreamy boy, dear Mother,  
Climbing to bed by slow degrees ;  
Again my sobs I smother  
Where, hid beneath the muffling spread,  
The heavenly music fills my head.

The heavenly music fills again  
My heart with childhood, Mother,  
And stirs with blended bliss and pain  
Yearning I cannot smother :  
A husht, tear-blinded ecstasy  
Of mingled love and memory.



Only Chopin, or Mendelssohn,  
None holier, and none other,  
Can paint for me, with magic tone,  
Your portrait, lovely Mother :  
That face, amid the golden hair,  
Forever young and debonair !

## FOR A CHILD CONVALESCENT

BITTER death,  
Blind heart-ache,  
Now that you are gone,  
How distracting-dear you make  
This soft breath, this ease-drawn breath  
Of my beloved one.  
*Sing, Spring!*  
*Be gracious, weather!*  
*My love and I and you are together.*

Budding boughs,  
Pale blue skies,  
What if you had come  
Senseless to her sealèd eyes,  
Impotent her sleep to rouse,  
All your songbirds dumb!  
*Sing, Spring!*  
*Be grateful, weather!*  
*My love and I and you are together.*

Mighty God,  
Thou in grace  
That didst Death deter:  
Lovely is Thy tranquil face  
In the sunlight or the sod,  
Loveliest in her.

*Sing, Spring!*  
Bring, wind,  
Soft weather —  
Long and kind.  
*Sing, Spring!*  
Wing, Song,  
On lark's feather —  
Silver-lined.

*Bring along,*  
Wind,  
Kind song and weather,  
Singing high —  
High on lark's wing —  
My love and I  
In love and Spring  
My love and I are together!

HALFWAY the climbing rose of Infancy —  
    With tears for dew-drops shining on its thorns,  
    Lit by the Mother-smile of peaceful morns,  
All pink in bloom, with now a golden bee,  
Burrowed in kisses, to hum lullaby,  
    And now a shower, that intermits and warns  
    The birds to carol 'twixt the thunder's horns,  
Robin of babyhood, thy nest I see.

Babe of the birds, when from thy rosy source  
    Thou shalt upclimb to boyhood's ruddier  
    charm,  
The brooks shall mock thy boisterous discourse,  
    The skies uplift thy shout, where, held from  
    harm,  
Thou shalt disport on the big world's battered  
    torse  
    Like Bacchus on the Elgin Hermes' arm.

## CATHLEEN

MY Cathleen of the wilding curl  
And roguish yellow ringlet,  
Oh, are you but a budding girl,  
Or cherub clipt of winglet?

I kissed you, clambering at my knee,  
All dimpled, shy and darling,  
When every glance you shot at me  
Flew like a starling.

You sang to me from printless books  
Of tree-top-boughs a secret  
So hushed, that in my heart those looks  
Of baby wonder speak yet.

Of pussy-cat — the chucklehead!  
An epic you told after,  
Till porch and lawn and garden-bed  
Caught that clear laughter.

You kissed me then — Ah, twinging joy!  
Cathleen, that I might hover  
About your steps, a golden boy,  
To grow your golden lover.

Your lover ! Nay, I scorn his name,  
Far rather, oh, far rather  
I'll live, to thwart him, what I am :  
His someday sweetheart's — father.

A BABY it was, or a bird :

'Twas hard to tell at a guessing ;  
For the only tidings I heard —

Save a lullaby low and caressing —  
Was a bunting out on a bough

Calling: *Quick, quick, quick, have you seen  
her ?*

And a chickadee, perched on the mow,

Singing: *Christy, Christy, Christina !*

Not a bird, but a baby she is !

So cuddly and quaint and surprising :  
As fresh as sweet clover to kiss,

More rosy and blithe than sunrising.  
And her brother *he* was the bird

Calling: *Quick, quick, quick, have you seen  
her ?*

And her sister the songster I heard

Singing: *Christy, Christy, Christina !*

BE merry, dear, for merry is the while,  
And let Mirth make a ladder of thy woes  
Whereon thy thoughts may mount unto thy  
smile —  
As fairies climb by briers to the rose.



THOU art the still-renewing spring  
For poesie's replenishing.  
By thy brink, like Rachel, stands  
Beauty pensive: in her hands  
Poised, she holds her artless pitcher;  
Her own reveries bewitch her  
Where she bends, with maiden start,  
To fill it faultless at thy heart.

But I — poor stumbler with verse-vessels,  
Worn rhyme-thin by fancy's pestles,  
Stub my toe with too much longing  
And break — what I should catch the song in.

I SAW white fields and shadows gray  
And clouds the low sun lurked behind;  
A quiet seemed to tint the day  
With fainter colors of the mind,  
For all of nature to my sight  
Was tempered by an inner light.

The winter sun set clear as wine,  
A silent star stole to its place,  
And still, beneath a glooming pine,  
She stood, with visionary grace  
Watching the sky: I could not speak;  
The words that faltered were too weak.

My voice was smothered in my eyes;  
I gazed — and what so changeless sweet  
(Since Love has twined our destinies)  
As when, in retrospection fleet,  
All after-visions I forget,  
And dream that I am gazing yet.

THE perfect rose has but a paltry fruit;  
The gracious summer but a garish end;  
And May's sweet choirs in August all are mute,  
And youth's strong loins his largess soon  
dispend.

The water-lily, at her ripening,  
Hides in the muddied lake her beauty's  
spores;  
Even in the tender calyx of the Spring  
The icy-sharded worm of Winter bores.

But you, dear, are a flower of God's own isle,  
Whose glammers ripen in the spirit's seed;  
The Galilean lilies are your smile,  
And in your aching heart the roses bleed;

And wreathed of fire cold Time can never smother  
The maiden yields her garland to the mother.

ONLY the strong have right to reign in song —  
The strong of soul, that are the warriors  
Of God. — The weak-at-heart, he that out-  
pours

His coward pain, perpetuates a wrong.  
Therefore I promised you I would be strong,  
Or silent: But now — hark! Again the doors  
Of heaven are wide, and on the palace floors  
I greet the Nine, who wept for me full long.

Look up once more, my love! The lark is risen;  
Not as of old, above the immaculate fields,  
Remote, of May he chants, but now he builds  
His nest of dew beneath the common prison  
Of Workaday: — O hark to him, dear one,  
Rounding, of song and toil, a Pantheon!

REALIZING that the lives of men are rills  
    Coursing in lines consecutive and bright  
Down the pied slopes of Time's 'eternal hills,'  
    Or flocks of mingling sea-birds, that alight

An hour upon the icebergs, there to strew  
    Wide Babel o'er the pristine silences,  
Then, soaring, blend in the universal blue:  
    Brooding an hundred analogues like these

That show how we, bright atom-points of thought  
    In this congested brain of being, reign  
An instant and no longer in the plot  
    Of God; realizing this, and then

Remembering I run my race with thee,  
I grow in love with my mortality.

As ripples widen where the stone is cast,  
    So we do wane toward the banks of death;  
    As dips the summer grass before the breath  
Of the west wind, so lightly we are passed:  
Our lives are liquid; even when Grief has massed  
    Their evanescent flowers to a mort-wreath,  
    They are such icy blooms as a frosty heath  
Paints on the glass-pane, and as long they last.

Therefore, since joy is the acquiescent will  
    That blends our spirits' limbs with all which  
    flows,  
Since pain is the stagnant eddy and the chill  
    That lies congealed within the withered rose,  
Let us, sweet friend, of beauty drink our fill,  
    And fix in natural change our soul's repose.

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